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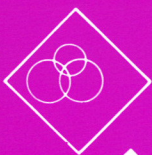
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JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL WELFARE

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CALL FOR PAPERS

Current Controversies in Social Welfare Theory

A special issue of *The Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* will be devoted to the current role of theory in attempts to understand social welfare problems. The focus will be to determine whether, or in what ways, theory is useful in helping researchers or policy makers to understand institutions, policies, or social problems. Are standard theoretical orientations such as eco-systems, social construction, or Marxism still relevant? Do they require modification, extension, and synthesis? Should they be replaced entirely? Which new theories offer the most promise for helping us understand current social welfare problems?

Possible topics might include:

- Do postmodernist theories undermine culture, or provide important insights into the subtle exercise of power?
- Does the differentiation between agency and structure make sense, or must institutions be conceptualized in a more integrated manner to end alienation?
- Does the notion of symbolic violence advanced by Bourdieu shed light on how racist practices are implemented in the current conservative climate?
- Are meta-theoretical integrations of knowledge, e.g. Wilber's four quadrants model, useful?
- Does chaos theory offer any advances over systems theory, or is it just as impotent when specific applications are called for?

Many other topics might be considered.

Please send your papers by March 1, 2005 to:

John W. Murphy, Department of Sociology, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL 33124.

Presidents, Profits, Productivity, & Poverty: A Great Divide between the Pre- & Post-Reagan U.S. Economy?

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This paper examined profits, productivity, and poverty in the United States from 1961 through 2002. Results indicated that the “great divide” thesis regarding the U.S. economy before and after the Reagan administration depends on which measure of the economy is the focus of attention. In addition, on some measures where before and after differences were detected, the nature of those differences was paradoxical. Corporate profits as a share of national income, for example, were highest in Democratic rather than Republican administrations and despite the increased income inequality of the post-Reagan years, individual and family poverty rates remained relatively constant after edging upward from the 1970s but still below 1960s highs. Further, findings provide some evidence corroborating neoclassic economic theory in regard to incentives and productivity and they present a challenge to activists who equate poverty as a natural or an inevitable byproduct of the more market-driven fiscal and monetary policies of the 1980s and 1990s.

Key words: economy, profits, production, poverty, Reagan administration, presidents

This paper examined profits, productivity, and poverty in the United States from 1961, with the onset of the Kennedy administration, through 2002, the first two years of the GW Bush administration. It focused on these and other macroeconomic measures by presidential terms to determine the nature and extent of economic life in the U.S. about twenty years before and after the Reagan administration. The paper was guided in part

by classical economic theory, which predicts that greater levels of productivity would be accompanied by increased corporate profits and income inequality, but also decreased poverty, and in part by contemporary fiscal policy informed by neoclassical economic theory, which predicts that readjusting tax incentives would promote greater levels of productivity (Fullerton, 1994; Smith, 1994/1776; Stiglitz, 2003). It tests the thesis that the Reagan administration can be viewed as a "great divide" in the sense that this and subsequent administrations relied more explicitly and ideologically on market mechanisms and increased productivity rather than on government programs per se to address social problems, with poverty reduction viewed as a natural byproduct of a dynamic economy (Anderson, 1988; *Economic Report of the President*, 1994; Feldstein, 1994a; Gilbert, 2002; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1989; Madrick, 2003).

In 1965, President Johnson declared a war on poverty. Several presidential policy advisors during the Johnson administration such as James Tobin and Robert Lampman proclaimed the prospects of eliminating poverty by 1980 (Iceland, 2003). During the 1970s, however, the U.S. experienced relatively double-digit inflation and nearly double-digit unemployment rates. Concern about poverty as a national problem, however, receded, especially after failures by Congress to pass President Nixon's Family Assistance Plan in 1969 and again in 1972. By the 1980s, President Reagan had declared that poverty won the war launched by President Johnson, that in effect government efforts failed and may have even exacerbated the problem. The Reagan administration stressed deregulation of market related activities and devolution of federal responsibilities of domestic policies and programs either to lower levels of government or to the private sector. States began experimenting with ways to promote greater labor force participation among welfare recipients. The Family Support Act of 1988 encouraged the further expansion of efforts linking poverty reduction with welfare recipients' labor force participation.

The economic expansion of the economy that the Reagan administration enjoyed after the 1981 recession was interrupted during the GH Bush Administration. The recession of 1990–91 paved the way in part for the advent of the Clinton administra-

tion. With a focus on deficit reduction, deregulation, and capital gains tax cuts, the Clinton administration enjoyed another expansion of the economy. Overall, the economic and social policies of the Clinton administration primarily relied on market mechanisms and looked to a growing economy to affect poverty rates, exemplified in part by its expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit in 1993 to boost the work-effort and income levels of low-income workers (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 1998; *Economic Report of the President*, 1994). The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Act of 1996, which created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and ended the entitlement nature of the Federal-State Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, explicitly aimed at, among other things, welfare reduction more so than at poverty reduction.

The Reagan administration can be viewed as a “great divide,” relying more explicitly and ideologically on market mechanisms and increased productivity rather than on government programs per se to address social problems, with poverty reduction viewed as a natural byproduct of a dynamic economy (Anderson, 1988; *Economic Report of the President*, 1994; Feldstein, 1994a; Judis, 1988; Madrick, 2003; Stein, 1984). The “great divide” also meant a shift in emphasis from pre-Reagan fiscal policy to post-Reagan monetary policy as the main mechanism by which the Federal Government intervened in the economy. This study sought to test the “great divide” thesis, that is, to determine how the ideological shift regarding the proper role of government in the economy and society that had accompanied the Reagan administration and gained ascendancy thereafter affected poverty / inequality between 1961 and 2002. In doing so, it assessed the extent to which there were significant differences in a variety of macroeconomic indicators and Federal capacity by presidential terms. The study provided an empirical basis for assessing the merits of the ideological underpinnings of presidential economic rhetoric and policies, with a particular focus on the relationship between prosperity and poverty / inequality in the U.S. Study results were intended to enable policymakers and others interested in the amelioration of poverty to get a better sense of how strongly the economic welfare of the nation coincided with poverty /

inequality and what if any relationship existed between corporate profits and poverty / inequality.

A wealth of popular and scholarly information about the state of the economy, macroeconomic measures, and related policies during the study period formed the backdrop of this study (see, Bartlett and Steele, 1992 & 1994; Blinder, 1987; Caputo, 1994; Feldstein, 1994a & b; Greider, 1987; Iceland, 2003; Krugman, 1990; Lieberman, 1991; Stein, 1984; Stiglitz, 2003), as well as annual issues of the *Economic Report of the President*. Many of the indices of the nation's economic welfare used in this study appeared in Stein's analysis of economic policy from the Roosevelt to the first Reagan administrations. As noted, the present study went beyond the Reagan administration, to the first two years of the GW Bush administration. It began with the Kennedy administration rather than with the Roosevelt administration, because poverty became part of the national domestic policy agenda during the 1960s. The present study also differed from Stein's, however, in part by focusing more directly on the link between economic performance and poverty and by including several measures of income inequality. This study contrasted presidential economic rhetoric and macroeconomic outcomes for approximately twenty years before and after the so-called Reagan revolution that signaled a transition from a political economy conducive to government efforts aimed at income redistribution to assist those in economic need to one more reliant on market mechanisms.

Method

Data

Unless otherwise noted, data were obtained from the *Economic Report of the President* (2003). Other sources of data, as cited in Table 1, were obtained from Federal Government Internet sites.

Measures

As can be seen from Table 1, most measures were self-explanatory. Some discussion, however, was needed in regard to several measures.

Corporate Profits. Corporate Profits A incorporated inventory valuation and capital consumption adjustments and excluded tax

Table 1

Study Measures

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Presidential Terms	Kennedy (1960–63), Johnson (1963–1968), Nixon (1969–1973), Ford (1974–1976), Carter (1977–1980), Reagan (1981–1988), Bush, GH (1989–1992), Clinton (1993–2000), Bush, GW (2001–Present)
Profits	
Corporate Profits A ¹	Percent of National Income
Corporate Profits B ²	Price per unit of Real Gross Product of Non-financial Corporate Business [\$s]
Productivity	
Growth Measures	
Real Gross Domestic Product ³	Billions of chained 1996 \$s.
Changes in Real Gross Domestic Product ³	Percent change in Real Gross Domestic Product from previous period
Output per hour ⁴	Output per hour of all persons, non-farm business, 1992 = 100
Changes in Output per hour ⁴	Percent change in non-farm business output per hour of all persons
Costs	
Employee Compensation A ¹	Percent of National Income
Employee Compensation B ²	Price per unit of Real Gross Product of Non-financial Corporate Business [\$s]
Federal Corporate Profit Taxes	Percent of Corporate Profits B
Poverty & Inequality	
Individual/Family Poverty ⁵	Percent of individuals/families with incomes below official poverty thresholds
Family Inequality A ⁶	Gini Index
Family Inequality B ⁶	Ratio of aggregate shares of family income of highest quintile to lowest quintile

continued

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<i>Poverty & Inequality continued</i>	
Family Inequality C ⁶	Ratio of aggregate shares of family income of top 5% of families to lowest quintile
<i>Other Measures</i>	
Federal Government Capacity	
Debt	As Percent of Gross Domestic Product
Surplus/Deficit	As Percent of Gross Domestic Product
Receipts	As Percent of Gross Domestic Product
Personal Income Taxes A ⁷	As Percent of Total Revenue
Corporate Taxes ⁷	As Percent of Total Revenue
Social Security Contributions ⁷	As Percent of Total Revenue
Money Supply	M1 as Percent of Gross Domestic Product
Labor Force Participation	Labor force participation rate of all civilians aged 16 or above
Personal Income Taxes B ⁸	As Percent of Personal Revenue
Personal Savings ⁹	As Percent of Disposable Income
Unemployment	Annual Unemployment Rate
Unemployment Duration	Annual, Average Weeks

Sources: ¹ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2003d;

² U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2003g; ³ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2003c; ⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003; ⁵ U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003b; ⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003a; ⁷ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2003b; ⁸ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2003f; ⁹ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2003e.

liabilities. Employee Compensation A included wage and salary accruals, as well as supplements to wages and salaries such as employer contributions to social insurance. Corporate Profits B and Employee Compensation B were determined by using the implicit price deflator for gross product of non-financial corporate business divided by 100. Corporate Profits B also incorporated inventory valuation and capital consumption adjustments and excluded tax liabilities. Compensation B incorporated unit labor costs.

Productivity. Productivity measures included Real Gross Domestic Product, percent changes in Real Gross Domestic Product from preceding periods, Output per Hour, and percent changes in Output Per Hour. The chained estimates of Real Gross Domestic Product were used rather than current dollars because they are the best available method for comparing the level of a given series at two points in time. For further related information regarding chained estimates, see U.S Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis (2003a).

Poverty & Inequality. Two measures of poverty included percents of individuals and families whose incomes fell below official U.S. poverty thresholds. Income inequality included Family Inequality A, measured as the Gini Index, a general measure of inequality among all families. The Gini Index ranges from 0 when all families have equal shares of income, to 1.0 when one family has all the income and the rest none (Jones & Weinberg, 2000). Income inequality also included Family Income Inequality B and C. Family Income Inequality B comprised ratios of aggregate shares of family income of the highest quintile to those of the lowest quintile, while Family Income Inequality C comprised those of the top five percent of families to those of the lowest quintile.

Other Measures. Several measures captured Federal Government capacity, including debt, surplus/deficits, and total receipts as percents of GDP. The sources of Federal receipts (Personal Income Taxes A, Corporate Taxes, and Social Security Contributions) as percents of total revenue were calculated from seasonally adjusted annual data. Money supply (M1) was included in part because of the Federal Reserve Board's shift in emphasis from money targeting in the pre-Reagan decades to interest targeting during the Reagan administration and afterwards (Arestis & Sawyer, 2003; Bernstein, 2001). Monetary policy is one of two main mechanisms by which the Federal Government exerts control over the economy. Unlike the mechanism of fiscal policy, which is subject to Congressional debate and approval, however, monetary policy, for which the Federal Reserve Board has responsibility, largely falls outside the political process per se.

Procedures

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine differences in each study measure by presidential term. Use of ANOVAs by presidential administrations made possible comparisons within the pre- and post-Reagan periods as well as between these two study periods. When statistically significant differences were found overall on a measure, post hoc analyses were done to determine differences between specific pairs of presidential terms. The Scheffe post hoc procedure was used when Levine's test of the null hypothesis for homogeneity of variance was accepted and the Games-Howell procedure was used when Levine's test of the null hypothesis for homogeneity of variance was rejected.

*Results**Differences in Economic Well-being by Presidential Terms*

As can be seen in Table 2, ANOVA results showed that no overall statistically significant differences by presidential terms were found for percentage changes in GDP, percentage changes in labor output per hour, or personal income taxes as a percent of personal income. Further, although an overall statistically significant difference by presidential terms was found for Federal revenue as a percent of GDP, post hoc analysis showed no such paired-comparison differences. Statistically significant differences were found for both measures of corporate profits, one measure of productivity (Real GDP), all three measures of costs associated with productivity, and all five measures of poverty and inequality, as well as all other measures of economic well-being in the U.S.

Corporate Profits. Corporate profits as a percent of national income ranged from a high of 8.6% under the Johnson administration to a low of 6.1% under the GH Bush administration. They were statistically indistinguishable during the Johnson, Kennedy, and Clinton administrations. During the Clinton administration, corporate profits as a percent of national income were greater than those of the Reagan administration. No statistically significant differences were found between the GW Bush administration and any other presidential terms.

Corporate profits as price per unit of Real GDP ranged from a high of 7 cents during the Clinton administration to a low of 2 cents during the Nixon administration. They were statistically indistinguishable during the Clinton and GW Bush administrations. Corporate profits as price per unit of Real GDP were greater during the Clinton administration than were those of the Reagan and GH Bush administrations, which in turn had greater profits than all other presidential terms, except as noted that of the GW Bush administration. On the whole, corporation profits accounted for greater shares of national income during the Democratic presidential terms of Kennedy, Johnson, and Clinton, but in terms of price per unit of Real GDP, corporations fared better during the Clinton and GW Bush administrations.

Productivity. Real GDP ranged from a high of \$9.3 trillion during the GW Bush administration to a low of \$2.6 trillion during the Kennedy administration, as measured in chained 1996 dollars. The GW Bush Administration had a higher Real GDP than that of all other presidential terms. The Clinton administration had a greater than Real GDP than that of the GH Bush administration, which in turn had a higher Real GDP than that during the Reagan administration. The Real GDP was statistically indistinguishable during the Reagan, Carter, Ford, and Nixon administrations and these were greater than that of the Johnson administration, which in turn had a greater GDP than that of the Kennedy administration.

Statistically significant differences by presidential administration were also found in regard to output per hour of all persons in non-farm businesses. Output per hour ranged from a high of 120.2 (with 100 = 1992) during the GW Bush administration to a low of 56.0 during the Kennedy administration. During the Clinton administration it was greater than that of all other presidential terms, with the exception of the GW Bush administration. Output per hour during the GH Bush administration was greater than that of the Reagan administration. During the Carter administration it was statistically indistinguishable from that of the Ford and Nixon administrations, all of which in turn had higher output per hour than the Johnson and Kennedy administrations. Output per hour during the Reagan administration was also greater than that of the Nixon administration.

Table 2
ANOVA Results

Measure	Kennedy (JFK)	Johnson (LBJ)	Nixon (RN)	Ford (GF)	Carter (JC)	Reagan (RR)	Bush (GHB)	Clinton (WJC)	Bush (GWB)	F-value	Post Hoc Tests Results
Profits											
Corp. Profits A	7.68	8.61	6.22	6.46	6.49	6.05	6.01	7.58	6.72	08.59***	LBJ > JC, RN, RR, GHB; WJC > RR
Corp. Profits B	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.07	0.06	36.70***	WJC > RR, GHB > JC, GF, LBJ, JFK, RN; WJC, GWB
Productivity											
Real GDP-billions \$s	2567	3175	3828	4198	4771	5586	6714	8061	9327	99.75***	GWB > WJC > GHB > RR, JC, GF, RN > LBJ > JFK;
Changes in Real GDP	4.20	5.22	2.85	2.60	3.28	3.36	1.95	3.70	1.35	01.07	
Output per Hour	55.97	64.22	72.43	78.85	82.08	88.36	96.48	107.18	120.20	108.30***	WJC > GHB > RR, JC, GF, RN > LBJ, JFK; RR > RN; GWB, WJC
Changes in Output/Hr	3.77	2.92	1.77	3.15	0.55	1.68	1.70	1.89	3.65	02.06	
Costs											
Employee Comp. A	68.68	68.96	72.74	72.81	72.48	73.53	72.38	71.39	71.95	16.47***	GF, RN, RR, JC, GHB, GWB, > LBJ, JFK; GWB, WJC > JFK

Employee Comp. B	0.18	0.19	0.24	0.31	0.38	0.52	0.61	0.65	0.69	311.85***	GWB, WJC, GHB > RR > JC, GF > RN > LBJ, JFK; GWB > GHB; RR > GF
Federal Taxes	42.74	39.66	45.89	43.79	46.08	38.35	39.80	36.39	46.78	03.12*	GWB, JC, RN, GF, JFK, GHB, LBJ, RR, WJC; RN, GF > JC
Poverty & Inequality											
Individual Poverty	20.80	15.60	11.90	12.05	11.93	14.08	13.83	13.29	11.90	17.89***	JFK, LBJ, RR, GHB, WJC, GF, JC, RN, GWB; JFK > RR > GF
Family Poverty	17.07	12.42	9.45	9.55	9.46	11.34	11.10	10.50	9.40	17.97***	JFK, LBJ, RR, GHB, WJC, GF, JC, RN, GWB; JFK > RR > GF
Family Inequality A ¹	0.37	0.35	0.35	0.36	0.36	0.39	0.40	0.43	0.44	140.14***	WJC > GHB > RR, JC, GF, RN, LBJ; GHB > JFK, JC
Family Inequality B ¹	8.49	7.62	7.40	7.27	7.62	8.88	9.89	11.11	11.36	74.07***	WJC > GHB > RR, JFK, JC, LBJ, RN, GF; RR > JC; JFK > RN
Family Inequality C ¹	3.28	2.94	2.81	2.66	2.77	3.31	3.89	4.82	5.00	76.46***	WJC > GHB > RR, JFK, LBJ, RN, JC, GF; RR > JC
Other Measures											
Federal Government Debt	43.60	35.82	27.08	26.40	26.75	34.86	44.00	45.06	33.70	16.68***	WJC, GHB, JFK > LBJ, RR, GWB > RN, JC, GF

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Kennedy</i> (JFK)	<i>Johnson</i> (LBJ)	<i>Nixon</i> (RN)	<i>Ford</i> (GF)	<i>Carter</i> (JC)	<i>Reagan</i> (RR)	<i>Bush</i> (GHB)	<i>Clinton</i> (WJC)	<i>Bush</i> (GWB)	<i>F-value</i>	<i>Post Hoc Tests Results</i>
Federal Government											
<i>continued</i>											
Surplus/Deficit(-)	-0.090	-1.12	-0.93	-3.80	-2.43	-4.23	-3.98	-0.76	-0.01	06.51***	RR, GHB, GF, JC, LBJ, RN, JFK, WJC, GWB; GHB > LBJ, RN, JFK; RR > WJC
Federal Revenue	17.67	17.56	18.23	17.55	18.33	18.16	17.90	19.14	18.90	02.33*	WJC, GWB, JC, RN, RR, GHB, JFK, LBJ, GF
Per. Inc. Tax A	35.29	34.17	36.62	35.27	38.06	38.21	37.33	39.11	40.95	05.81***	GWB, WJC, RR, JC, GHB, RR, JFK, GF, LBJ; WJC > LBJ; RR > JFK
Corp. Taxes	16.57	16.68	12.85	12.43	12.53	8.77	8.56	9.31	7.04	88.89***	LBJ, JFK > RN, JC, GF > WJC, RR, GHB, GWB
Soc. Sec.	13.08	15.04	17.92	20.65	21.21	24.28	25.68	24.50	25.13	74.85***	GHB, WJC, RR > JC, GF, RN, LBJ, JFK; GHB, GWB > JC; RN > JFK
Contrib.											
Money Supply	5.80	5.55	6.22	7.06	7.73	10.77	13.15	13.87	12.86	52.07***	WJC, GHB, GWB, RR > JC, GF, RN > JFK, LBJ

Labor Force Part.	58.93	59.20	60.53	61.40	63.25	64.74	66.40	66.85	66.75	180.92***	WJC, GWB, GHB > RR, JC, GF, RN > LBJ, JFK
Per. Inc. Tax B	10.10	9.67	10.38	09.32	10.42	9.88	9.32	10.38	10.45	01.33	GF, RN, JC, RR, LBJ, JFK,
Personal Savings	8.13	8.70	9.55	10.00	9.28	9.20	8.08	7.74	3.00	17.62***	GHB > WJC, GWB
Unemploy. Rate	5.97	4.18	5.07	8.10	6.53	7.54	6.30	5.20	5.30	06.92***	GF, RR > LBJ; RR > WJC, RN
Unemploy. Duration	14.77	10.52	09.92	15.00	12.23	15.76	13.83	15.80	14.90	06.84***	WJC, RR > LBJ, RN

¹ The Presidential Term of George W. Bush was omitted on this measure because data were unavailable for 2002.

On the whole, productivity as measured by Real GDP and Output per Hour was highest in the GW Bush and Clinton administrations. There was no statistically significant difference in regard to the rate of change in either of these two measures between any presidential terms.

In regard to costs associated with productivity, statistically significant differences were found by presidential terms on all three measures. Employee compensation as a percent of national income ranged from a high of 73.5% during the Reagan administration to a low of 68.8% during the Kennedy administration. It was statistically indistinguishable among all presidential terms from Nixon through GW Bush. All but the Clinton administration had higher employee compensation as a percent of national income than that of the Johnson and Kennedy administrations, whereas that of the Clinton administration was greater than that of the Kennedy administration.

Employee compensation, as price per unit of Real Gross Profit in non-financial corporate business, ranged from a high of 69 cents during the GW Bush administration to a low of 18 cents during the Kennedy Administration. It was statistically indistinguishable during the GW Bush, Clinton, and GH Bush administrations. Each of these presidential terms had greater such employee compensation than that of the Reagan administration, which in turn had a greater percentage than that of the Carter administration. During the Carter administration such employee compensation was comparable to that of the Ford administration, both of which had higher levels than that of the Nixon administration, which in turn had a higher level than those of the Johnson and Kennedy administrations. In addition, employee compensation as price per unit of Real Gross Profit was higher in the GW Bush administration than it was during the GH Bush administration and it was higher in the Reagan administration than it was during the Ford administration.

Finally, Federal corporate profit taxes as a percent of corporate profits ranged from a high of 46.9% during the GW Bush administration to a low of 39.7% during the Kennedy administration. They were statistically indistinguishable among presidential terms, with one exception: corporate profit taxes were higher as a percent of corporate profits during the Nixon and Carter administrations than during the Clinton administration.

On the whole, workers fared much better in terms of their compensation in the late 1980s and 1990s than they did during the late 1970s and most of the 1980s, but even during the presidential terms of Nixon and Carter they fared better than they did during the Johnson and Kennedy administrations. As workers were doing better, corporate taxes as a percent of their profits remained relatively flat between 1961 and 2002, with the exception of the Nixon and Ford administrations when they exceeded those of the Clinton administration.

Poverty & Inequality. Rates of both individual and family poverty ranged from highs of 20.8% and 17.7% respectively during the Kennedy administration to lows of 11.9% and 9.4% during the GW Bush administration. On both measures, the Kennedy administration had greater rates of poverty than all other presidential administrations with the exception of the Johnson administration from which it was statistically indistinguishable. The Reagan administration nonetheless had higher rates of individual and family poverty than those of the Ford administration, whose rates of individual and family poverty were comparable to those of the Carter, Nixon, and GW Bush administrations. The higher individual and family poverty rates of the Reagan administration were also comparable during the GH Bush, and Clinton administrations.

As measured by the Gini Coefficient, family inequality ranged from a high of .43 during the Clinton administration to a low of .35 during the Johnson and Nixon administrations. As the ratio of aggregate shares of family income, families in the top five percent of incomes and in the highest quintile earned highs of 4.8 and 11.1 more respectively than did families in the lowest quintile during the Clinton administration, whereas they earned lows of 2.7 and 7.3 times more respectively during the Ford administration.

Although there was variation across presidential terms, family inequality reached their highest levels on all three measures during the Clinton administration, surpassing that of all other presidential terms. It should be noted, that in the first year of the GW Bush administration (the measures were unavailable for the second year of the Bush Administration at the time of the study), the measures of family inequality were quite close to and slightly higher than those of the Clinton administration: .44 on the

Gini Coefficient, 5.0 and 11.4 respectively on shares of aggregate family income of top five percent and high quintile vs. the lowest quintiles.

On the whole, rates of individual and family poverty were highest in the 1960s, declined somewhat in the 1970s, but stabilized upward in the 1980s and afterwards. Family inequality increased during the Reagan and GH Bush administrations, but increased even more during the Clinton administration.

Other Macroeconomic Measures. Measures related to Federal Government capacity included Federal debt, surplus/deficit, and receipt as percents of GDP, personal income taxes, corporate taxes, and Social Security contributions as percents of Total Federal Revenue. Government debt as a percent of GDP ranged from a high of 45.6% during the Clinton administration to a low of 26.4% during the Ford administration. It was statistically indistinguishable during the presidential terms of Clinton, GH Bush, and Kennedy, all of whom had greater government debt to a statistically significant degree than those of the Johnson, Reagan, and GW Bush administrations, which in turn had statistically significant higher percentages of debt than the comparable levels during the Nixon, Carter and Ford administrations.

The government deficit as a percent of GDP ranged from a high of 4.23% during the Reagan administration to a low of 0.76% during the Clinton administration. It was statistically indistinguishable during the Reagan and GH Bush administrations, both of which had statistically significant greater deficits than those in the Johnson, Nixon, and Kennedy administrations. Deficits during the Clinton administration were statistically comparable to those of the GH Bush and GW Bush administrations.

Government receipts as a percent of GDP ranged from a high of 19.1% during the Clinton administration to a low of 17.6% during the Ford administration. Despite an overall statistically significant difference in receipts as percents of GDP ($F = 2.33, p < .05$), post hoc analysis indicated no statistical differences among the cross comparisons between presidential terms.

On the whole, the Federal Government ran comparable debts during the early and latter years of the study period, namely in the 1960s and in the 1980s and afterwards, while it ran greater deficits,

as a percent of GDP, primarily during the Reagan administration. Throughout the entire study period, Total Receipts, as a percent of GDP, were comparable across presidential administrations.

Personal income taxes, as a percent of the Federal Government's Total Revenue, ranged from a high of 41.0% during the GW Bush administration to a low of 34.2% during the Johnson administration. It was statistically indistinguishable during the GW Bush and Clinton administrations. The Clinton administration received a greater portion of Total Revenue from personal income taxes than that of the Johnson administration and the Reagan administration received a greater portion than that of the Kennedy, Ford, and Johnson administrations. No other differences in personal income taxes as percents of Total Revenue were found among other cross-paired comparisons of presidential terms.

Corporate taxes as a percent of Total Revenue ranged from a high of 16.7% during the Johnson administration to a low of 7.0% during the GW Bush administration. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations generated statistically significant higher percentages of Total Revenue from corporate taxes than the Nixon, Carter, and Ford administrations. The Clinton, Reagan, GH Bush, and GW Bush administrations generated comparable percentages of Total Revenue from corporate taxes and these percentages were in turn lower to a statistically significant degree than all other cross-paired comparisons with other presidential terms.

Social Security contributions as a percent of Total Revenue ranged from a high of 25.7% during the GH Bush administration to a low of 13.1% during the Kennedy administration. During the GH Bush, Clinton, and Reagan administrations they were greater to a statistically significant degree than those of all other cross-paired comparisons of presidential terms. The GW Bush administration had a greater percentage of Total Revenue from Social Security contributions than the Carter administration. The Nixon administration had a greater percentage than that of JFK. On the whole, personal income taxes and Social Security contributions increased as proportions of Total Revenue from the 1980s onward, while those of corporate taxes declined.

Other macroeconomic measures included the M1 supply of money as a percent of GDP, labor force participation rates of all

persons 16 years of age and older, personal income taxes as a percent of personal revenue, personal savings as a percent of personal disposable income, annual unemployment rates, and average number of weeks unemployed per year. The M1 supply of money ranged from a high of 13.9% of GDP during the Clinton administration to a low of 5.6% during the Johnson administration. It was more plentiful to a statistically significant degree during the Clinton, GH Bush, GW Bush, and Reagan administrations than all other presidential terms. M1 was more plentiful to a statistically significant degree during the Carter and Ford administrations compared to that of the Nixon administration, which in turn had a greater M1 supply than the roughly comparable supplies in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

The labor force participation rate ranged from a high of 10% during the Clinton administration to a low of 58.9% during the Kennedy administration. The Clinton, GW Bush, and GH Bush administrations had higher rates than those of the Reagan, Carter, Ford, and Nixon administrations, which, in turn, had higher rates than did the Johnson and Kennedy administrations. On the whole, the greater availability of money supply from the Reagan administration onwards was accompanied by greater labor force participation rates.

Personal income taxes as a percent of personal revenue ranged from a high of 14.4% during the GW Bush and Carter administrations to a low of 9.3% during the GH Bush and Ford administrations. No statistically significant relationship was found in regard to personal income as a percent of personal revenue by presidential terms.

Personal savings as a percent of disposable income ranged from high of 10.0% during the Ford administration to a low of 3.0% during the GW Bush administration. The Ford, Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Johnson, Kennedy, and GH Bush administrations had higher percentages of personal savings rates than the comparable rates of the Clinton and GW Bush administrations. On the whole, despite the greater availability of money supply and greater labor force participation rates in the latter half of the study period and despite the relatively stable level of personal income taxes as a percent of personal revenue, personal savings were

lowest throughout the 1990s, during the Clinton and GW Bush administrations.

The unemployment rate ranged from a high of 8.1% during the Ford administration to a low of 4.2% during the Johnson administration. The Ford and Reagan administrations had higher rates than that of the Johnson administration. Further, the Reagan administration had higher unemployment rates than those of the Clinton and Nixon administrations. No other differences in unemployment rates were found among other cross-paired comparisons of presidential terms.

The average number of weeks unemployed ranged from a high of 15.8% per year during the Clinton administration to a low of 9.9% during the Nixon administration. Duration of unemployment during the Clinton and Reagan administrations was longer than those of the Johnson and Nixon administrations. No other differences in duration of unemployment were found among other cross-paired comparisons of presidential terms. On the whole, the improving economy and greater availability of money supply from the Reagan Administration onwards was accompanied by higher rates of unemployment during the 1980s and longer duration of unemployment spells during the 1990s.

Discussion

Results of this study indicate that the “great divide” thesis regarding the U.S. economy before and after the Reagan administration depends on which measure of the economy is the focus of attention. In addition, on some measures where before and after differences are detected, the nature of those differences is paradoxical. Further, findings provide some evidence corroborating neoclassic economic theory in regard to incentives and productivity and they present a challenge to activists who equate income inequality and poverty as natural or inevitable byproducts of the more market-driven fiscal and monetary policies of the 1980s and 1990s.

Measures supporting the thesis include Corporate Profits as a percent of GDP, Real GDP, Output per Hour, Employee Compensation, Income Inequality, Federal Deficits, Personal and

Corporate Income Taxes, Social Security contributions, Labor Force Participation, M1 Money Supply, Unemployment Rates, and Duration of Unemployment. Measures not supporting the thesis include Corporate Profits as a Share of National Income, Corporate Taxes, changes in Real GDP and Output per Hour, Individual and Family Poverty, Federal Debt, and Total Federal Revenues.

Findings of this study indicate that corporate profits accounted for greater shares of national income during the Democratic presidential terms of Kennedy, Johnson, and Clinton. This finding is consistent with Varian (2003) who reported results of a study showing that investments in stocks outperformed bonds under Democrats rather than under Republican presidents. In addition, corporate taxes as a percent of their profits remained relatively flat between 1961 and 2002, with the exception of the Nixon and Ford administrations when they exceeded those of the Clinton administration. In regard to corporate profits as a share of national income and corporate taxes as a percent of their profits, the "great divide" thesis does not hold.

In terms of corporate profits as a percent of Real GDP, however, findings of this study show that corporations fared better throughout the 1980s and 1990s, especially during the Clinton and GW Bush administrations. These findings indicate that economic welfare measured by Real GDP and corporate profits were more closely tied together following the Reagan administration than prior to it. The "great divide" thesis holds. Overall, these findings suggest that whether Democrats or Republicans occupy the White House corporations benefit relative to Real GDP whenever the virtues of market mechanisms are extolled and form the basis of economic policies.

In regard to productivity, the "great divide" thesis gets mixed support. Findings show that productivity as measured by Real GDP and Output per Hour were highest in the GW Bush and Clinton administrations, but there were no statistically significant differences found in regard to the rate of change on either of these two measures between any presidential terms. That is, productivity increased constantly, but it did so at an even rate that did not correlate with presidential administrations. Hence, the size of the economy and level of worker output per hour were

greater after than before the Reagan administration, supporting the "great divide" thesis. Nonetheless, the relatively similar rates of change on each of these measures between presidential terms cast doubts on the "great divide" thesis.

Findings indicate that workers fared much better in terms of their compensation in the late 1980s and 1990s than they did during the late 1970s and most of the 1980s. In addition, findings indicate that workers' shares of national income were paradoxically higher during Republican administrations than the earlier Democratic administrations and to a lesser extent than the Clinton administration when corporate shares were highest. In regard to workers' compensation, the "great divide" thesis for the most part holds. These findings are consistent with related results showing the greater availability of the M1 supply of money from the Reagan administration onwards and the greater labor force participation rates. After the inflationary 1970s, Federal Reserve efforts to curb inflation and lower interest rates made more money available, which invariably contributed to increasing productivity and wages, as well as to drawing proportionately more of the working age population into the labor force. Overall, findings about workers' compensation and corporate profits corroborate neoclassical economic theory regarding incentives and productivity. They provide some evidence for the "great divide" thesis: fiscal and monetary policies since the Reagan administration sought and apparently achieved a better match between increasing productivity and its rewards to corporations and workers in the aggregate. It should be noted, however, that total compensation, which includes fringe benefits, is not the same as wages, which declined or remained flat from the late 1970s through the mid-1990s (Bernstein & Mishel, 1997).

In regard to poverty and inequality, findings indicate that the rates of individual and family poverty were highest in the 1960s, declined somewhat in the 1970s, but they stabilized upward in the 1980s and afterwards. Findings also indicated that family inequality increased during the Reagan and GH Bush administrations, but increased even more during the Clinton administration. These findings in part contradict Stiglitz (2003) who claimed that poverty was reduced and inequality halted during the Clinton administration (p. xxi). Rather, they support

both neoclassical economic theory and the "great divide" thesis in regard to inequality: inequality substantially increased, as did the economy, more so after the Reagan administration than before it. Findings, however, did not support the "great divide" thesis in regard to individual and family poverty, both of which stabilized upward in the 1980s and afterwards. They suggest on one hand that increasing productivity is insufficient to mitigate poverty rates and on the other hand that increased income inequality among families need not be accompanied by increased individual or family poverty. This is not to say that it does not matter if rich people get richer as long as poor people hold their own economically or move above the poverty line. These findings do suggest that redistributive arguments cast in zero-sum terms between inequality and poverty might be a harder sell even as a social justice issue (Nathanson, 1998). To the extent that increased income inequality is not accompanied by increased individual or family poverty rates, social welfare advocates and policy makers may want to focus on reducing poverty rather than income inequality as a social problem during times of economic expansion.

In regard to Federal capacity, findings indicate that the Federal Government ran comparable debts, as a percent of GDP, during the early and latter years of the study period, namely in the 1960s, the 1980s and afterwards, and that it ran greater deficits, also as a percent of GDP, primarily during the Reagan administration. As GDP increases, so does the national debt, signifying that presidential fiscal policies have been fairly consistent over the past four decades with national debt and GDP roughly balanced. In regard to national debt, the "great divide" thesis does not hold. Unlike debt, which is a cumulative sum that the nation owes its creditors, surplus/deficits reflect deviations from annual budgets. Findings suggest that the amount of national debt per se need not be problematic to the extent it remains a relatively constant proportion of GDP. To the extent the nation borrows money to pay for annual deficits, however, the nation's debt increases. Whether or not the nation's productivity can increase sufficiently to generate the funds necessary to meet the Social Security obligations of the Baby Boom generation in the absence of other programmatic changes is uncertain at best.

Findings also indicate that Total Receipts, as a percent of GDP, were comparable between presidential terms throughout the entire study period. The “great divide” thesis does not hold for Total Receipts. Nonetheless, results show that personal income taxes and Social Security contributions increased as proportions of Total Revenue from the 1980s onward, while those of corporate taxes as a proportion of Total Revenue declined. As Friedman (2003) also documents, there has been a role-reversal regarding Social Security contributions and corporate income taxes as shares of Federal tax receipts, with corporate income taxes reaching its peak of 32% of Federal tax revenues in 1952 to just over 7% in 2003 and payroll taxes representing about 10% of Federal tax revenues in 1952 and 40% in 2003. The “great divide” notion does not hold in regard to the components of Total Revenue. These findings suggest that the favorable tax treatment the Federal Government gave to corporations over the past two decades was accompanied, as previously noted, by greater levels of GDP, as well as of employee compensation, but also by greater income inequality without any discernable reduction in poverty rates. Workers may have benefited from higher levels of compensation in the post-Reagan era, but their take home pay was partially eroded by increased income and payroll taxes, while corporations enjoyed the dual rewards of lower taxes and higher profits.

Finally, costs associated with greater levels of GDP, employee compensation, and labor force participation rates since the 1980s include higher rates of unemployment during the 1980s and longer duration of unemployment spells and lower levels of personal savings throughout 1990s. These findings support the “great divide” thesis and represent the downside of efforts relying primarily on market forces to increase productivity. Nonetheless, given these costs, especially higher unemployment rates and greater duration of unemployment, it is all the more remarkable that individual and family poverty rates remained relatively flat once they stabilized upwards in the 1980s and afterwards from the 1970s rates but still below the 1960s rates. A question policy makers and others must face is whether the overall benefits of the economy throughout the 1980s and 1990s were good enough. For many they are not (e.g., Goolsbee, 2003; Roach, 2003) and to the extent that structural changes in the economy portend decreases

in the rates of job creation, the future holds less promise in the absence of government intervention (Groshen & Potter, 2003). Perhaps costs associated with reducing individual and family poverty rates, however, are more than the country is willing to bear.

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Losing the “Eyes in the Back of Our Heads”: Social Service Skills, Lean Caring, and Violence

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Violence in the social services work place in general, and the developmental services in particular, has increased in the last several years. Findings from an ethnographic study suggests that new, lean forms of work organization remove opportunities to use or learn many of the tacit or practice skills workers previously used to keep themselves and their clients safer in the work place. This article describes many of these skills and the new management schemes that remove the possibility to develop or transmit these praxis skills. The article concludes by analyzing the convergence between the new labour processes and the competency approach to work place skills. Noting the loss of praxis skills that kept workers and clients safer, the conclusion highlights the hidden costs to developmental sector clients and workers.

Key words: violence, social services, skills, workplace, labour, safety, workers

While non-fatal injury and occupational illness rates have been falling in workplaces across Canada and the United States, rates in health care and the social services have been soaring (Boyd, 1995; National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 2000). Evidence from one Canadian province indicates a tenfold increase in claims from social service workers (Boyd, 1995). Many of these claims seem to be related to the high level of client perpetrated violence against staff. In Canada, the rate of injury in the developmental services sector is higher than that in other parts of the social services. The developmental services sector is a subsector of the social services which provides com-

munity services to people with intellectual disabilities. Until de-institutionalization in the 1970s, most people with intellectual disabilities spent their lives in long-term care facilities or asylums (Charlton, 1996; Michalko, 2002; Oliver, 1996). While some argue that the impetus behind de-institutionalization was a recognition of the rights of people with disabilities to reach their full potential, others assert that inadequate funding has resulted in the continued warehousing and stigmatization of people with intellectual disabilities (albeit in smaller settings), rather than their integration into a caring community (Braddock and Hemp, 1997; Taylor and Bogdan, 1989; Traustadottir, 2000).

Like other parts of the social services sector, the developmental services sector has, in recent years, been hit with funding cuts, and has integrated new mandates and models of management that lean out service delivery, and reflect a move away from social obligation and mutual responsibility (Baines, 2004a, 2004b; Abramovitz and Withorn, 1999; Clarke and Newman, 1992; Fabricant and Burghardt, 1997). Part of this new lean model and logic of service delivery is a reformulation of workers' skills. Under restructuring, skills are no longer recognized as a complex synergy of individual and collective knowledge that develop incrementally and over time. Rather, skills are recast as "competencies" or "human capital" that workers should own or obtain (Jackson, 1997). Competencies or skills are measured against "value-added, which means basically contributions to profits." (124) Dominelli and Hoogvelt (1996) note that the notion of "competencies" was introduced as "a way of defining the core skills professionals needed to do the jobs which employers wanted them to do" (55), rather than defining core skills within the broader context of what social service workers should be doing. Within the competency framing of skills, if activities and interactions in the social services do not contribute to cost-saving, they are likely to be eliminated from the prescribed tasks and routines of workers.

This restructured managerial and skill regime appears to be one of the major shifts that has increased the risk and likelihood of violence in the developmental sector. A recent ethnographic study of three developmental service agencies in Ontario, Canada showed that, while violence is endemic in the developmental services workplace, many workers, particularly those hired prior to social service restructuring, displayed skills that appear to

significantly reduce client-perpetrated violence (Baines, Hadley, Pollack, Slade, Brooker, Fay, Lewchuk, Preston, and Dimatrova, 2002). These skills were not generally found in the academic text books, competencies discourse, or performance management literature that guides most contemporary approaches to human service management. Known in the skills literature as tacit-knowledge (Darrah, 1997), these skills were learned on the job by workers who had sufficient time and support to develop a sense of working as an informal team, and to learn from each other, their clients, and their own lived-in experience. While managerial approaches such as Total Quality Management (TQM) purport to capture and make use of tacit-skills, in most work places, the empowerment aspects of TQM are never realized and the approach to skills continues to operate under a top-down, human resources framing which denies the existence of tacit-skills, the social nature of work and learning, and the importance of interpersonal networks in the workplace (Darrah, 1997; Manwearing and Wood, 1984). Indeed, various aspects of the contemporary organization of developmental services work means that opportunities to use, learn and transmit these tacit- or *praxis*-level skills are being eliminated, along with the skills themselves, and the greater safety they provided to workers and clients.

The Research Project

This article analyses a subset of data from a larger qualitative study aimed at developing multi-level portraits of three developmental service agencies in order to identify and theorize about factors that contribute to stress, violence and workload issues in the restructured social services sector. A multi-method ethnographic approach was used to gather interview, participant observation and document data in three unionized, developmental services agencies in Ontario, Canada's most populous and wealthy province. The study's eleven participant observation sites were selected based on recommendations by key informants (executive director, union president, and key workers) which were cross-referenced. Field notes taken during the participant observations were subsequently transcribed and analyzed in concert with interview data.

Forty-one in-depth, semi-structured, audio tape-recorded interviews took place in which research participants were posed broad questions relating to changes they had seen or experienced in the workplace in the last five years in relation to work organization, pace, workload, stress, health concerns, violence, and other workplace issues that might concern them. A purposive (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) sample was built for key informants (executive director, union president, key managers and workers) while a snowball sample of front-line staff was built in two of the three sites. At the request of the executive director (E.D.) in one site, starting at a random point in a staff list supplied by the E.D., every ninth worker was contacted and asked to participate in the study until a full sample was achieved.

The average age of those interviewed across the three sites was 37.1 years, with an average of 9.9 years employment in the agency. The sample was approximately 35 per cent male. As workers of colour and youth have been identified in the literature as especially vulnerable to stress and injury (National Occupational Research Agenda, 1999; National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health/National Occupational Research Agenda, 1995), a small purposive sample of each of these groups was also interviewed and will be written about separately.

The study also included a review of agency documents related to health and safety such as incident reports, first aid report, liability claim forms, and Health and Safety Committee minutes. Document data were compiled and compared across reporting forms, and statistical profiles were developed where possible. Data were analyzed using a quasi-grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) method involving constant comparison of the data until themes emerged and connections could be made across and among data. Data analysis diverged from grounded theory in that emerging themes were linked to larger economic, political and managerial trends in the sector in order to develop themes beyond those found in individual narratives and observations.

Defining the Problem: Worker Behavior or Work Organization

Studies in Canada place rates of violence among social service workers at 61 per cent of respondents (Canadian Union of Public

Employees, 1994). These findings are similar to those conducted in the U.S. where the rate of assault ranged from 57 per cent (Newhill, 1997) to 26 per cent (Tully, Kropf and Price, 1993). Shultz (1987) and Brockman and MacLean (2000) found that the type and severity of violence varied according to the type of social service agency, with certain kinds of services experiencing significantly higher levels of violence. For example, Canadian studies indicate that child welfare and developmental service workers experience higher levels of violence than do workers in welfare or community services (Canadian Union of Public Employees, 1999; Ontario Public Service Employees Union, 1999; Pizzino, 1994).

While the research described above substantiates high levels of violence in the social services, little is known about the negative impacts new forms of work organization have had on stress and workplace abuse or how older forms of work organization may have kept developmental sector workers and clients safer. It will be argued that it is not just that older forms of work organization permitted workers to interact more positively and in a less stressed way with clients, thus reducing frictions that may lead to violent outbursts. It is also that within the older work organization environments, workers could and did develop tacit or practice skills that kept them and their clients safer. The new forms of work organization fail to recognize the existence of these skills, and create conditions under which it is very difficult to develop or transmit them. Eventually, the widespread reliance of new forms of work organization could result in the elimination of tacit skills from the everyday *praxis*-level knowledge of developmental workers and an exacerbation of workplace violence.

The current increase in workplace violence (Pizzino, 2002, 1994; Rey, 1996; Tully, Kropf and Price, 1993), has been studied from three major positions - - as an outcome of lean work organization (Boyd, 2002; Taylor and Tyler, 2000), as a lack of skills and behavior strategies on the part of the workers (Donovan, 1987; Rey, 1996), or as both (Chapell and Di Martino, 1998; Pizzino, 2002; Stanley and Goddard, 2002). Behavior or human resource strategies focus on initiating changes in the workers' skills, activities and conduct with the aim of minimizing or diffusing workplace violence. Combining human capital (competencies)

and human resource development, behavior strategies usually focus on worker training, violence policy development, and supervisory reinforcement of preferred worker behaviors. (Arway, 2002; Kinney, 1995; Rey, 1996; Stanley and Goddard, 2002). However, Taylor and Tyler (2002) assert that these strategies accept that violence is an occupational hazard to which workers must adjust and place the onus on the workers to reduce or accommodate violence, rather than on management to remove the root causes of workplace assault. In contrast, the work organization literature shifts the exclusive focus on employee responsibility to the following factors: reductions in staff levels; decreased time to perform quality work; unmet client expectations; and client frustration with inferior services (Boyd, 2002; Pizzino, 2002; Taylor and Tyler, 2002).

It is well established that workplace violence is linked to the way work is organized, suggesting that certain kinds of conditions, such as handling cash, or working alone, generate a higher risk of violence (Boyd, 2002; Chapell and Di Martino, 1998; Pizzino, 2002; National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 1996). Even minor changes in work organization can lessen or increase the potential for violence in the workplace. Moreover, other kinds of workplace problems, such as stress and workload issues, are also linked to work organization (Baines et al., 2002; CUPE, 1999; Gardell, 1982; Karasek and Thorell, 1990; Karasek, 1979; Kohn, 1976; Messing and Reveret, 1983). Scholars from occupational health, labour studies, sociology, and social work have pointed to the way that new lean and flexible forms of work organization increase workplace stress and negative health impacts. For example, Landsbergis, Cahill and Schnall (1999) argue the introduction of lean production management systems in health care, and in industry increase stress and associated health problems. Research further substantiates that violence occurs more frequently among highly stressed workers than those experiencing lower stress (Northwestern National Life, 1993). The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) (1996) notes that while stress can be a cause and an effect of workplace violence, occurrences of workplace violence inevitably lead to increased stress and even to long-term health disorders.

Praxis Skills That Keep Workers and Clients Safer

Workers involved in this study reported that they relied on close relationships with their clients and their co-workers to keep the environment safe and on a positive footing. Long-term workers talked about being able to discern how clients are likely to behave by how they walk through the door. A capacity to instantly assess clients, inter-client dynamics, and likely trigger points is required throughout a shift. Multi-level observation skills were coupled with a detailed and nuanced knowledge of each client and their likely triggers. Daily activities were planned and organized in such a way as to minimize factors that could escalate stressed clients or create an environment in which tempers flare. Workers reported detailed knowledge of how each client got along with other clients and each staff member, which types of activities produced anxiety for each client, as well as which activities were likely to de-escalate hurt or tense feelings for each individual. Seating plans and staff assignments have special salience in violence prevention strategies, as do calming activities and interventions at tricky transition points such as activity changes, shift changes, the evening meal and getting on and off transportation. Workers called this “up-front work” in which they learn to “read” clients’ emotional states, and remain tightly attuned to the smallest change in moods, activity levels, or new stressors in the environment. Up-front work also involved the development of individualized prevention strategies for each client aimed at the avoidance of triggers that may threaten the safety of the individual and group. Both verbal and non-verbal communication skills were used in up-front work as many clients had communication disorders or are completely or largely non-verbal.

Diffusion of heightened tensions is another important *in situ* set of skills as the introduction of new staff or clients, new furniture or equipment, and changes in daily programming or meal times could disrupt otherwise unflurried routines and result in stressed shifts and problematic inter-personal dynamics. Observation and timely, client-specific interventions were key to preventing violence. As one worker put it, a detailed knowledge of

"what sets the guys (clients) off", and what works best to calm them down, means that, "we can nip things in the bud before they actually get out of hand."

Proud of the capacity for professional, ongoing, multi-factor monitoring, workers likened it to a mother's capacity to supervise children while completing numerous other tasks within the home. As one day program worker observed of her team's ability to assess potential trouble spots and intervene quickly, "we all have eyes in the back of our heads and we know what is going on all around us all the time." One of the remaining intact team of mostly full-time, permanent workers laughed about their senior worker's capacity to call out admonitions to fractious clients during meal times without even turning her head to see who was causing an uproar. This capacity gave her an almost mythical standing among clients and staff, although it is not unlike practices of mothers and others who provide care to the young.

Despite the measures described above, violence sometimes occurred. Pre-arranged intervention strategies and team work were seen as key to quickly quelling violent situations and reducing disruption of clients and workers. One worker reported that "you need to know that the other staff on the shift will back you and that they know what they are doing." Team work requires time to plan, a sense of common goals, and as one worker put it, "a kind of shorthand form of communication" in which single words or short phrases elicit the back-up strategies needed to isolate or restrain assaultive individuals, assist the victim, remove other clients and staff from the vicinity, de-escalate the crisis, and call for medical or supervisory assistance. Debriefing with clients and co-workers is the final step needed in a good violence intervention plan. This step re-establishes that everyone is safe, and assesses how well strategies worked as well as what changes may be needed in the future.

The skills described in this section include instant assessment of individual clients, ongoing monitoring and assessment of individual clients, inter-client dynamics, and group dynamics, planning, coordinating, strategy and intervention development, team communication, violence diffusion, violence intervention, client and co-worker debriefing and program re-evaluation and fine-tuning. As a number of workers observed, and the data produced

by the study substantiates, the most important skills on the job are "communication" and "interpersonal skills". Communication and interpersonal relating between staff and clients and among staff, never stopped and when impeded in some way, difficulties almost always emerged. While some of these skills are recognized by management and parts of many are taught in formal education settings, their operationalization within a developmental services setting requires the kind of knowledge and skills that come from actual practice with real people in their lived-in actualities.

The work force in the developmental services is predominantly female and, as noted earlier, some of the skills described above resemble those of mothers. Such skills are often thought to be natural for women, rather than learned, and generally not understood to involve high level skills, knowledge and creativity (Baines, Evans and Neysmith, 1998; Glazer, 1993; Herd and Meyer, 2002). Managerial, governmental and academic evaluations of skills tend to devalue the kinds relational skills many women use in their work, and elevate the technical skills required in men's work (Duane-Richard, 2000; Jenson, 1989). Jane Gaskell (1990) argues that "skills designations are nothing more than power relations expressed in the language of skill." (143) These same power relations are seen in evaluations of competencies which tend to emphasize formal teaching from managers or institutions of higher learning, and downplay or ignore informal skill sharing among workers, the ways that groups of workers accomplish tasks using the diversity of skills and strengths present in a group and the synergy of strengths that develop within a team (Darrah, 1997). As Duane Richard (2000) notes, skill evaluations are tools by which wage inequality is perpetuated and occupation segregation is justified.

Strategically using the performance management notion of "best practices", in a technical report to managers our research team noted that "best practices" were found in environments in which staff had sufficient time and resources to build supportive relationships with clients, and positive relationships with each other (Baines *et al*, 2002). Best practices also included the work of a supervisor who demonstrated a supportive and active interest in clients and workers, acted as a problem solver and hands-on trouble-shooter, while providing latitude for staff decision

making and support for their initiatives (Baines *et al*, 2002). Unfortunately, as the next section will show, situations in which best practices were found were regrettably rare and are likely to become increasingly so as restructuring and funding cutbacks continue in the social services sector.

Lean Caring and the Erasure of Praxis Skills

In this study, several factors were identified that affect the development of *praxis* skills among social service workers. Central among these was workload. Cuts in staffing have resulted in an increase in case loads for most workers. "When I started here I had a case load of eighteen, and now it's thirty with no increase in resources," said one worker. Another observed that, "we've lost over fifteen positions since 1989 and none of the work; in fact, the work has increased . . . including massive amounts of work downloaded from supervisors." Funding cuts have impacted negatively on staff and supervisors, resulting in reductions in the numbers of both. Many of the tasks previously completed by supervisors are now the responsibility of front-line workers who find there is less time and fewer staff to complete the work. Like other parts of the human services, the discourse of accountability has raced through the social services sector, and has been operationalized as increased documentation and statistics keeping (Baines, 2004b; Foster and Hoggett, 1999; Richmond and Shields, 2003) further expanding the work load of the front-line developmental services employee.

In addition to increased paperwork, the sector has seen an increase in both the absolute number of clients and the level of care required. This is due, in large part, to the general aging of the North American population which increases workload in the developmental services sector in two ways. Many of the clients who were part of the first wave of de-institutionalization and community care are now geriatric or near-geriatric and require increasing levels of care. In addition, many of the new clients entering the system have been living with their parents who are now too elderly to continue to provide care. All these clients require additional resources as they adjust to new environments. An increasingly geriatric client population increases lifting, feeding,

and bathing responsibilities and necessitate the development of age-appropriate activities. As one worker noted, "it is a bigger work load partly because you have to spend more time doing everything. You can't expect an elderly man to put on his clothes as fast as a younger one. They just need more time and help." This expanded workload coupled with staff reductions is another factor contributing to staff overload and burn-out.

Funding cuts have exacerbated this situation resulting in a general deficit of programming and activity resources, as well as staffing and time. As one worker noted, "even if we had money to take these guys out on field trips and activities, who has time to plan anything?" Another added, "very little of the day is spent preparing or planning because there is no time for it. Most of the day is spent flying by the seat of your pants." Over-stretched workers and inadequate programming monies means that clients are often bored and inactive, while workers struggle to remain on top of their workloads creating an environment that is full of anxiety and the potential for frustration and outbursts. One worker commented that in the past they could provide services in a "proactive way"; now due to under staffing and lack of programming and planning funds, "instead of being proactive, you're always being reactive."

Increased workload impacts on workplace safety and skill loss in two ways. First, as noted earlier, workers depend on their detailed knowledge of each client, their mood changes, their likely triggers, interventions that deflect or diffuse conflict, what form an outburst might take, how long it will last, how often it will change form, and how best to assist the client in stopping the process, debriefing from it and moving on. This is not the kind of knowledge that can be developed when the pace and intensity of work is such that workers find they can do little but keep clients fed and relatively calm. Secondly, workers need to develop a sense of their co-workers strengths and abilities and ways of communicating among themselves, so that a clear sense of team work emerges, back-up plans can be confirmed, and violence prevention strategies can be enacted by a short phrase or quick word. Again, dependable relationships between co-workers cannot be developed when the pace and intensity

of work means that communication is minimal and must be restricted to the reactive strategies noted above.

The near-mythical veteran worker, described earlier, who could admonish or encourage clients without turning her head to see what was going on, was part of one of the few remaining teams of workers who had worked together for a long period of time and were mostly full-time, permanent workers. The way this team worked together was evocative of a ballet in which each participant had her part fully memorized, and skillfully and almost intuitively, synchronized her movements to those of her co-workers and clients, as well as to the harmony of community care and client development. The work site was, by far, the most positive and creative program we observed in the course of this study. That is not to say that anxiety and violence did not occur during our observations on this site, only that these moments, like the other events in this environment, were responded to in a well-choreographed way, in which disruption was minimized, other clients and workers were kept as safe as possible, the feelings of all present were attended to (including feelings about the outburst itself and its impact), and the work of the program continued. In short, this group of employees exceeded the expectations one might have of workers in the developmental sector by pooling their skills, using the best of each other's strengths, and trusting that, as a team, they could handle difficulties and promote growth among their clients, and themselves. It is quite possible that as the mostly full-time, permanent status of team members, and long history of working together was not replicated in other work sites, neither was the high level of skill, synergy of team strengths, and increased safety.

Another factor that exacerbates the loss of skills and violence prevention strategies in the leaned-out developmental service sector is the increased reliance on temporary and various categories of part-time workers including casual, crisis, on-call, contract, and regular part-time. Whereas full-time workers could expect benefits such as pensions, drug plans, and long-term disability (medical insurance is provided by the Canadian government as a right of citizenship), even among the better employers in the developmental sector, the various categories of part-time and temporary employees experience lower wages and few or

no benefits. Economically, employees experienced increased job insecurity as well as decreased income and benefits, while the agencies save costs in these same areas. Thin shifting such as solo shifts, and access to fellow staffers only at other work sites (for example, other group homes) have become increasingly the norm, particularly for night shifts, which as the literature shows, increases the risk of violent attack (Chapell and DiMartino, 1998; NIOSH, 1996). Other forms of flexible work such as split shifts, wherein workers put in an hour or two at the beginning of the day and return in the evening for a few more hours, are also becoming prevalent and prove to be very disruptive to the family life of the predominantly female work force. One split shifter reported "barely seeing my kids", and another questioned how her family would "survive".

The inconsistent staffing, characteristic of flexible work forms, increases the likelihood of violence in the developmental work place in three ways—it disrupts clients, prevents the development of detailed knowledge of each clients, and curtails communication and strength pooling between and among staff, as well as the synergy of team work. Particularly in agencies where clients have communication disorders, even tiny changes in the everyday environment can precipitate high levels of anxiety which may result in lashing out and other violent behavior, much of which is likely unintentional. Intentional or not, the impact of assaultive behavior on workers and other clients can be serious and definitely increases the overall level of stress within a work place (Northwestern National Life, 1993). High levels of stress may spark new outbursts and even higher levels of anxiety, dropping the work/care site into a cycle of tension, flare-ups, increased tension and further escalations of frustration, inappropriate behavior, and increased potential for worker or co-client assault. As one front-line worker noted, "it's like a hamster wheel, the stress and violence go round and round feeding off each other and no one can get off it."

According to managers and staff alike, minimizing changes in the everyday environment is key to preventing the disruption of clients. Flexible staffing in which workers are employed for irregular shifts lengths (ranging from one and a half to twenty four hours or more), irregular days (for example, one at the start

of the month and seven consecutively at the end), and a largely part-time work force that is shifted from program to program depending on demand, is antithetical to the aforementioned minimization of changes and client anxiety. In reality, flexible staffing looks like a formula to escalate client anxiety, and diminish client and staff safety. As one worker noted, "in the larger programs you used to have a number of staff to rely on . . . to bring various skills to use to de-escalate a situation without resorting to physical restraint . . . the ability to handle aggressive clients has been made harder, no doubt about it." Flexible staffing also means the staff are less likely to know or get to know the clients. They are also less likely to work with other staffers with whom they are familiar and who know they can depend on for consistent back-up or diffusion of tense moments. Thus, team building and the pooling of strengths was seen to be almost impossible.

Finally, lean work organization ensures there are few routes for skill transmission between and among workers, even if workers found a way to develop the high level *praxis* skills that helped to keep the work environment safer prior to the introduction of heavier workloads and flexible staffing. Few opportunities to observe or communicate with other staff, very little in the way of agency training, and a diminished sense of team culture cuts off the avenues previously used to share and build anti-violence prevention and intervention skills and strategies. Tense work environments also reduce morale and the likelihood that workers will communicate effectively with each other, or be open to new ideas and approaches.

Discussion and Conclusion

As noted earlier, the current discourse regarding professional skills is couched in terms of competencies. While this article has examined ways that new forms of work organization have inhibited and extinguished the *praxis*-skills that kept workers and clients safer in the developmental services, the current preoccupation with skill as competencies is another force that narrows social service practice, making it easier to increase work load and pace, employ a less skilled and temporary work force, and remove the spaces in which tacit-knowledge developed and flour-

ished. As Dominelli and Hoogvelt (1996) argue, competencies "fragment complex processual tasks into discrete components" (p. 56) and remake a caring profession which had a fair degree of discretionary decision making power into a Taylorized, routinized form of labour (p. 56). Fragmentation is a form of deskilling which means that the work is easier to complete, hence professional credentials required for the job, and wages costs can be lowered. It also makes it easier to supervise work hence management components can also be reduced resulting in further cost saving. Moreover, the remaining work can be monitored through a series of bureaucratic standards and technical controls, such as competency guidelines, rather than on-the-job, contextual interpretations, independent judgement, reflexivity, and a breadth of social, political, and professional skills. As Jackson (1997) argues, competency-based approaches use skill definition and skill training to "increase the subordination of the worker to the wishes of the employer" (p. 125). Although professional social work associations in the U.S.A. and Canada emphasize the pursuit of social justice as a pivotal facet of social work practice (National Association of Social Workers, 1999; Canadian Association of Social Workers, 1994), the process of defining core skills or competencies occurred within the context of employers who stressed cost reductions and value-added skills, and downplayed the social and political nature of skills, skill transmission, and how these skill sets may fit into social service workers' pursuit of social justice. As such, numerous skills, such as those used by the workers in this study, were made invisible and space has not been made for them in professional core-skill definitions or agency-level work organization plans.

Marie Campbell (2000) notes that restructuring in health care has removed the capacity of front-line nurses to participate in the informal planning, task coordination, relationship building, and mentoring that have been the bedrock of quality nursing care and practice-skill transmission. She warns that this knowledge may be permanently lost as control of the work process transfers increasingly to management, and away from the front-lines. With graver warnings of how the restructured care environment can result in skill loss, Geraldine Lee-Treweek's (1997) shows that many workers in long-term care survive by viewing their increas-

ingly alienating work as “just a job” rather than a contribution to caring for vulnerable populations (96–97). Within this defensive framing, workers survive their jobs by treating clients like objects and cutting themselves off entirely from their clients’ pain and humanity (97). As the development of community-based care was an attempt to move away from inhuman warehousing approaches to people living with intellectual disabilities, it would be a large step backwards if workers were to lose their caring skills and capacities. Within the context of an increasing violent work place, the removal of the ability to keep oneself, one’s client and co-workers safer is a sure way to increase worker alienation and frustration. It is difficult to imagine that this will not have a ripple effect on worker morale, empathy, patience, creativity, communication and other skills associated with caring labour.

While the loss of the tacit-skills described above certainly qualifies as one of the hidden costs of social service restructuring, the cost to teams of workers and individual workers in terms of increased stress, frustration, and injury is also high. As the findings from this study show, and workers and managers confirmed, clients are the victims of violence from other clients far more often than are workers. Thus, the loss of violence reduction skills and strategies extracts a high price from the most vulnerable people in the developmental services sector, namely clients who have few opportunities to seek other services, or means to resolve or redress assaults on themselves, their workers, and their friends. As financial savings in the short term seems to be the only possible benefit of the new forms of work organization, it appears that the costs - both social and individual - are far too high in the long term and have been extracted from those least able to resist or enact meaningful changes in their worlds.

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The Decline of the Public Intellectual in Social Work

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This article examines reasons for social work's abandonment of public discourse, activism and intellectual life. It also explores strategies to encourage the profession to reenter public life and develop a modern cadre of social work identified public intellectuals. Specifically, this process entails professional and academic reform and a renewed vision around the social justice mission of social work.

Key words: public intellectuals, schools of social work, alienation, research methodology, social justice, social survey movement, social work history

Nowadays, social workers have little influence on the pressing social issues of the day. Discussions around Social Security privatization, Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) reauthorization, Medicare reform, the health care crisis, poverty, and other social welfare-related issues are dominated by economists, political scientists, attorneys and professional policy analysts rather than social workers (Karger & Stoesz, 2002). Not surprisingly, even former president Clinton's welfare reform panel was headed by David Ellwood, Mary Jo Bane and Bruce Reed, none of whom were social workers or even identified with the profession.

In contrast to the early twentieth century, there is a marked absence of social commentators with the appellation "social worker." Indeed, there is little or no social work presence in public venues such as speaking tours, radio talk shows, television news shows, popular magazines, newspaper editorials, op-ed pages or

other mechanisms that inform the public about welfare and public policy issues. Not since Wilbur Cohen's tenure as an official of the Social Security Administration (1935–1956), and then as assistant secretary, undersecretary and finally Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (1961–1969), has a social work-related official occupied a highly visible federal office. Although Cohen was often claimed by social work—perhaps because of a 4-year stint as a professor of public welfare administration at the University of Michigan—his degree was in economics. In fact, Cohen's last academic appointment was as dean of the School of Education at the University of Michigan (1969–1979) (Berkowitz & Cohen, 1995).

The Need for Social Work Identified Public Intellectuals

The need for social work identified public intellectuals is especially pressing at the present time. In particular, this results from a rapidly changing economy and profound changes in America's political and economic Zeitgeist. For instance, the United States was recently mired in an economic recession. The DOW Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) started 2000 at 11,357; by March 2003 it fell to 7,500, a drop of 34% (Dow Jones, 2003). Although the DJIA rose to almost 2000 levels by late 2003, it was not followed by a concomitant reduction in unemployment. Job creation was virtually stagnant since the recovery in 2002, and family income dropped. By late 2003 the unemployment rate was close to 6% (rising from 4% in 2000), and more realistically, closer to 8% if "missing" workers (the unemployed that gave up the job search) are added (Economic Policy Institute, 2004). The rise in unemployment has hit the poor hard, especially former recipients who have reached their TANF lifetime cap.

Economic problems were exacerbated as the federal budget went from a surplus of \$122 billion in 1999 to a record deficit of more than \$450 billion in 2003, a number expected to rise to more than \$520 billion in 2004. This huge deficit translated into zero growth in governmental spending (a cut since social spending is negative unless it increases with population growth) and deep cuts in social welfare programs. State budget deficits intensified the economic crisis. In 2003, California posted a record deficit

of \$38 billion (Governor's Budget Summary, 2003); Texas, \$10–12 billion; and New York, \$10 billion (Schumer, 2003). Concomitantly, while corporate profits and productivity grew since 2002, wages for those in the bottom 10 percent of the workforce declined by almost 15 percent from 1989 to 2003, and family income inequality rose by 22 percent from 1968 to 1994 (Weinberg, 2002; Karger, 2005). Only a few mainstream pundits have consistently commented about the effects of the skewed economy on the poor (Krugman, 2002).

Social work has historically relied on the Democratic party to promulgate a progressive social welfare agenda. However, by the 1980s most Democrats had discarded the liberal agenda—moving towards the right and often squarely into fiscal and social conservatism. Most of the current crop of Democrats, such as John Kerry, Howard Dean, Wesley Clark, John Edwards, Joseph Lieberman, and so forth, are neither strong defenders of the welfare state nor especially sensitive to the problems of the poor. The historic base of support for the welfare state has virtually disintegrated on both the state and national levels. Moreover, even liberal economists, such as Paul Krugman, only speak tangentially about welfare spending, and then limit their concerns to larger budgetary or other economic issues. The traditional Democratic party advocates for social welfare policy have either died, abandoned their posts, or have been relieved of their duty by the electorate.

David Stoesz (2003) argues that liberal non-affiliated public intellectuals may be a thing of the past. Indeed, conservatism has become the dominant force in public policy. One reason for this phenomenon is that conservatives have successfully dominated public venues through a network of solidly endowed think tanks, such as the Heritage Foundation, the Olin Foundation, the Hoover Institute and the Cato Institute (Morin & Dean, 1999; Gould, 2003; Rorty, 1998). While liberal think tanks exist, they lack the financing, organization, and political influence of the conservative think tanks. As a result, the liberal defense of the welfare state is weak, and for the past 30 years, social progressives have been in retreat from the conservative juggernaut. For example, most “talking head” television or radio programs are headed by conservatives, such as Robert Novak, Patrick Buchanan, Rush Limbaugh, William Buckley and John McLaughlin. While right-

wing pundits can be easily identified by most Americans who own a television set, the same is not true for leading progressive advocates—many of whom are women and people of color. Even when the “left” is represented for the sake of balance, it is usually by centrists such as Morton Kondracke, Fred Barnes, Michael Kinsley or Charles Krauthammer. The real American left is virtually absent from American talk shows. Three principal areas influence the dearth of public intellectuals in social work: (1) the institutional auspices under which social workers are employed; (2) rigid ideas about professionalism; and (3) the insularity of modern academic life.

Factors Mitigating Against the Emergence of Public Intellectuals in Social Work

Most social service institutions that employ social workers fail to encourage—or outrightly discourage—the public exposure of their employees around controversial issues. According to Michael Barth (2003), about 43% of social workers are employed in the private for- or non-profit service compared with 57% who work in the public sector. Whether in the private or public sector, the vast majority of social workers are in direct service areas that leave little time for public involvement. For instance, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) notes that professional social workers are the nation’s largest group of mental health service providers. There are more clinically trained social workers—over 190,000 in 1998—than psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychiatric nurses combined (NASW, Fact Sheet, 2003). Severe understaffing at many social service agencies has resulted in long hours and high caseloads. Complaints about poor working conditions has been linked to some dramatic work stoppages in recent years, including a 1997 walk-out by child service workers in Los Angeles county (Rainey and Meyer, 1997). In fact, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) maintains that one of the major challenges to the profession is the deterioration of public sector employment standards. The decline in workplace standards in many private and public employment settings may partly explain why NASW members in private practice grew from 10.9% in 1982 to 19.7% in

1995 (Gibelman and Schervish, 1997). Overall, the kinds of jobs and the conditions that many social workers labor under do little to encourage the growth of public intellectuals.

Social service organizations exist within a political context and are sustained by federal funding and/or the largesse of philanthropists and the United Way. However, by the middle 1990s the political context grew more tenuous as the House of Representatives and the Senate became controlled by conservative Republicans. By 2003, Republicans controlled 29 governorships and 21 state legislatures (Democrats controlled 17) (National Governors Association, 2003; National Conference on State Legislatures, 2002). In the current climate, social welfare agencies are struggling to maintain their level of funding and are therefore reluctant to risk alienating right-wing politicians. The operative concept is caution, and social agencies are fearful of supporting the public involvement of employees that might further alienate inherently hostile political forces. Clearly, beleaguered social welfare agencies cannot be expected to endorse the controversies that lie at the heart of public discourse.

Professionalism and Public Intellectuals

The halcyon days of social work activism are long gone. Also gone is social work's formidable presence in public life. Social work-identified luminaries included Jane Addams, Mary van Kleeck, Grace and Edith Abbott, Frances Perkins, Harry Hopkins, Julia Lathrop, Lillian Wald and others. These reformers influenced far-ranging issues such as child labor laws, employment protection for women, labor unions, consumer protection, social security and even war and peace. However, after the profession's initial burst of public visibility in the early 20th century, it slowly descended into a micro-practice orientation, leaving public policy to a new breed of non-social work-identified specialists.

Social work's adoption of micro practice and hyper-professionalism led to a form of anti-intellectualism, which manifested itself in several ways, including a partial withdrawal from its earlier social justice mission. For instance, a cursory examination of two leading social work education journals (*Journal of Social Work Education* and *Social Work Education*) showed that in 2001–2002 they published 167 articles; only 19 directly addressed

diversity and social justice. There were no articles on religious minorities (i.e., Christian fundamentalism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam). Given its continuing focus on the pathology of the individual and the family, the social work profession has drifted away from being in the vanguard of social justice (McDonald, Harris and Wintersteen, 2003). The refusal of social work education to address important social justice issues has, in turn, alienated much of the vulnerable client base that the profession professes to help. Current pressure to firm up a professional identity has also produced practitioners that function mainly as administrators and clinicians, while overlooking the historic role of advocate and public intellectual (McDonald, Harris and Wintersteen, 2003).

Exclusion, Professionalism, Anti-Intellectualism and Public Intellectuals

NASW proudly touts the accomplishments of esteemed luminaries such as Jane Addams, Frances Perkins (Secretary of Labor under FDR), Whitney M. Young, (Executive Director of the National Urban League), Harry Hopkins (FDR confidant and head of the Works Progress Administration), Dorothy Height (National Council of Negro Women) and Jeanette Rankin (first woman elected to Congress) (NASW, Social Work History, 2003). This is certainly an impressive list, but only Dorothy Height, in her 90s, is still alive. With the exception of Whitney Young, no one on the NASW list had a social work degree and can legitimately be called a social worker. Moreover, if these reformers were still alive, they would be ineligible to sit for the licensing examination. Nor could they teach a practice course in a social work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), since they lacked two years of post-MSW practice experience. These reformers would also be violating state licensing laws if they called themselves social workers. Consequently, much of social work history is based on fiction, since only one of these heroes can be legitimately labeled as a social worker by today's standards.

Even a cursory review of historical literature illustrates that the glory days of social work (the early 1900s-1930s) was dominated by reformers who migrated to the profession from other

fields such as political science (Frances Perkins), economics (Wilbur Cohen, Mary van Kleeck), education (Jane Addams), nursing (Lillian Wald), philosophy (Florence Kelley), sociology (Robert Woods) and journalism (Paul Kellogg). Without a formal organization to bestow the appellation of "social worker," the connection to the profession occurred largely through self-labeling. One was a social worker if one considered oneself to be a social worker.

Early social work was a refuge for disaffected intellectuals that could not (or would not) fit into a conventional academic discipline. It was also an outlet for those people that felt a strong commitment to social justice. Social work was a magnet for progressive reformers and thinkers in diverse disciplines that were attracted to the profession because of a common cause. And, it was a home where disenfranchised intellectuals could find like minds. Social work was an area that fused intellectual theories with social action (Chambers, 1980). In that sense, early social work reformers were committed to a broad cause rather than a narrow discipline.

The early 20th century saw the rise of social work-educated practitioners who craved the legitimacy accorded by professionalization (Lubove, 1969). With the advent of professional education in the early 1900s, many social workers began to develop a strong professional identity. In contrast to early reformers, for these practitioners the connection was stronger to the profession than the cause of social justice.

By the early 1960s, social work had virtually abandoned its intellectual roots, and in the process, relinquished the utopian vision that guided early reformers. The decline of the public intellectual—whether in social policy, community organization or micro practice—began as early as the 1920s (Lubove, 1969). Consequently, the utopian vision of reformers began to fade as social work followed the lead of medicine and moved through the twentieth century embracing professionalism and pragmatism (Lubove, 1969; Leiby, 1978, Chambers, 1980; Trattner, 1998). For instance, even when social work addressed larger macro issues, it was often in the form of incremental changes that were bureaucratic rather than visionary. More scientific and sterile approaches to policy and planning supplanted the broad social vision of early

reformers. Even practice theories were under assault, and by the late 1960s, the intellectually- driven psychodynamic orientation was judged irrelevant and even misogynistic. Depth psychology was replaced by pragmatic, task oriented therapies. The most significant decision in clinical practice was to pair social work with psychiatry by relying on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Licensing became a necessary prerequisite for third-party reimbursement, which only furthered the reliance on the DSM. Not surprisingly, the move toward professionalization transformed social work into a marketplace commodity as skill- building replaced intellectual training. Predictably, social work was led farther away from its early vision of social justice. In that sense, the social work profession substituted a narrow preoccupation with methods and skills for a utopian vision of social justice.

The decision of the social work profession to focus on methods and skills rather than social justice, fostered an anti-intellectualism rooted in pragmatism. One of the most striking consequences of the pursuit for professional identity was the substitution of inclusivity for exclusivity. Specifically, instead of being inclusive—i.e., welcoming those willing to define themselves as social workers—the profession became exclusive as professional education and credentials superseded knowledge, competence and reputation. If the social work profession could not legitimately lay claim to a unique body of knowledge, then it could at least appropriate a broad occupational category.

While non social work-degreed reformers were honored speakers and awarded plaques, they were simultaneously denied admission into the inner circles of the profession, such as membership on the NASW and CSWE boards of directors, and editorial positions on mainstream journals. By enforcing exclusivity, the social work profession squashed the very intellectual and interdisciplinary vibrancy that gave it public recognition. Forced out by territorialism and a rigid allegiance to professionalism, early social work reformers wandered into other movements, such as labor unions, community organizations, universities and advocacy organizations. Not coincidentally, the more social work clung to exclusivity and parochial professionalism, the less salient its message became. Nowadays, the social work profession is

probably less understood by the general public than it was 100 years ago.

Abraham Flexner (1915) accused social work of not being a fully-fledged profession as early as 1915. Almost 100 years later, social workers still can not adequately define their profession. Nor is the profession any closer to finding a unique niche than at the beginning of the 20th century. In fact, social work is losing ground in mental health where it now competes with nursing, counseling psychology, marriage and family therapy, and other disciplines eager to claim this turf. After almost 100 years in a university setting, there are fewer deans of social work than in 1980, despite the rapid growth of social work degree programs. Virtually every new social work program developed in the last 20 years has been part of another college or department (Karger & Stoesz, 2003). Despite 100 years of professional education, social work has yet to produce the caliber of self-defined social work reformers that forged their place in American social history. Perhaps it is time for the social work profession to reconsider professional exclusivity.

Instead of clinging to professional exclusivity, social work can reclaim part of its lost intellectual heritage by adopting a more inclusive approach. Like the early 1900s, many of today's progressive public intellectuals and academics are uncomfortable in their disciplines and searching for a home that provides more freedom to pursue their interests. This group includes progressive sociologists looking for venues for applied research; economists unhappy with the conservative bent of their discipline; and progressive educators, attorneys, journalists, community activists and politicians. By inviting dissident scholars, activists and intellectuals into the profession—much as they were in the early 1900s—some of the intellectual vitality missing in modern social work can be restored. This cross-fertilization can also help cultivate a cadre of public intellectuals able to effectively address social issues.

Adopting an inclusive orientation would result in important changes within the profession. For one, social work would be forced to substitute more permeable professional boundaries for parochial professionalism. In that sense, the profession could become an umbrella capable of sheltering intellectual fugitives from various disciplines, while at the same time, forging a unique

social work orientation. For example, social work licensing could be redefined to pertain only to positions in mental health, physical health, and child welfare that would benefit from this kind of regulation. Courses in social work programs would be taught by instructors best able to teach them, regardless of their disciplinary background. By broadening professional boundaries, those who share a social work orientation would not only be eligible to teach, but also to publicly promote a progressive agenda under the banner of social work.

Although social work has a unique orientation—the person-in-environment—it lacks a clear body of discipline-specific knowledge. Moreover, the sociological, philosophical, economic and social theories that informed social work education pioneers, such as London School of Economics-trained Edith Abbott, is absent from much of contemporary social work education. For example, while textbooks on human behavior cover a wide range of theories, the brevity of the examination leads to texts more appropriate for undergraduate survey courses than graduate education. Consequently, the more in-depth and critical writings on culture, individuals, and society have been done by scholars in the social sciences, the humanities and cultural studies. Historically, the strength of social work education lies not in creating new theories, but in synthesizing existing ones. Ironically, while social work educators are quick to adopt theories in biology, cultural and women's studies, social ecology, and so forth, they refuse to invite in the scholars that developed or are using those ideas.

Academia and the Demise of the Public Intellectual

In the *Last Intellectual*, Russell Jacoby (1987) maintains that the American intellectual landscape was historically populated by important thinkers such as Irving Howe, Daniel Bell, John Kenneth Galbraith, Lionel Trilling, Edmund Wilson, Thorstein Veblen, Lewis Mumford, and others. Jacoby argues that these public intellectuals are long gone and no younger group of a similar stature are succeeding them. He attributes this phenomenon to the rapid growth of American universities that occurred during the 1960s and 1970s.

According to Jacoby, the academization of the American Left in the early 1970s led to a decline in the quality of public-oriented

critical writing. Earlier intellectuals capable of straddling the line between scholarship and public literary venues were replaced by academic careerists that exploited theoretically fashionable prejudices to secure tenure. Unlike former intellectuals that wrote for the public, today's progressive thinkers retreat into expanding universities, where the politics of tenure, promotion and merit pay loom larger than the call to participate in public life. Jacoby maintains that modern intellectuals have become specialists and teachers, mainly addressing themselves to other colleagues and a few chosen students. Only a few intellectuals court a wider public audience, and they often face criticism because of a lack of objectivity. The academy's disdain of public discourse has produced intellectuals preoccupied with methodological correctness and academic careerism (Wolfe, 2001). As a result, the vision and prose of intellectual life is suffocated by the ideology of conformity. What remains is stilted language and microscopic concepts understandable to only a few students or academics. Predictably, this intellectual vacuum saps the vitality of American intellectual life.

Factors That Hinder the Rise of Public Intellectuals in Social Work

Social work education has provided succor to the forces bent on turning American universities into specialized vocational centers. Specifically, this occurs by requiring internships that eclipse the number of classroom hours, open admissions policies, diminished expectations for intellectual work by students and faculty, the failure to terminate students except in the most egregious cases, and the refusal to acknowledge some validity in national testing (Karger & Stoesz, 2003). Social work educators have been complicit in the trend toward vocationalization by allowing the discipline to be viewed as technical/vocational rather than academic. This orientation has also mitigated against the re-emergence of social work-identified public intellectuals.

The transformation of social work from an academic discipline to a vocation is justified by the argument that a professional school requires a different set of expectations. Unfortunately, these "different expectations" often translate into less

emphasis on critical thought and rigorous scholarship: Disciplines develop theories while vocations develop techniques. The trend toward vocationalization also results in social work educators being viewed as technicians instead of academics. The anti-intellectualism manifested in a vocational approach also reflects the institutional failure of social work education. Specifically, even though several schools of social work are housed in world-class universities, few have developed a theoretically coherent school of thought by which they are internationally recognized. Even in cases where a school of thought has emerged, such as ecological theory or the strengths-based perspective, it has never extended beyond the boundaries of social work education. While social work blithely adopts theories from other disciplines, no discipline appears to have adopted theories from social work.

The Role of Research in Social Work Education

Intellectual rigor, curiosity, and a drive to expand multi-disciplinary knowledge are becoming traits rarely rewarded in academia. Instead, praise and rewards are heaped upon faculty that exhibit a workmanlike approach to academic life—find a sub-specialization, stake claim to it, and then mine it relentlessly. Lost is the thrill of intellectual discovery and the excitement of synthesizing seemingly disparate ideas into a larger framework. The result is the subordination of intellectual life into routine work, and the squelching of ambitious thinking that leads to new intellectual paradigms. Although specialization is commonplace in all academic disciplines, social work has a unique mission, one that includes a strong commitment to social justice. As such, the emphasis on micro-specialization may be a questionable pursuit for the social work profession.

New social work faculty are encouraged to find research topics rife for future funding. This advice ensures that new academics will adjust to the entrepreneurial nature of academia, where the generation of knowledge is secondary to the generation of revenues. In large measure, this represents the adjustment to an academic cottage industry in which intellectual ideas are mainly prized for the cash they generate. The value of faculty members are being increasingly determined by the fiscal value of their ideas.

The focus on grants and funded research often results in a dispassionate approach to academic life. Specialists toiling away in federal or state designated research areas do not produce the kind of scholarship that addresses the larger questions. In fact, many academics avoid the big picture since federal and state agencies rarely fund that type of research. Indeed, theoretical research is often dismissed as being scientifically spurious or too popular to be taken seriously.

Following other disciplines, social work has striven to apply rigorous scientific research methods to human problems. Despite this commitment, most quantitative studies in social work have neither been especially productive nor spectacular in their impact. William Epstein summarizes the dilemma:

There is not one scientifically credible proof that any social work intervention—even broadly conceived to include psychotherapy, counseling, drug and alcohol interventions, job training, delinquency services—has ever provided prevention, treatment, or rehabilitation under any condition of laboratory or field investigation with any type of service recipients. Social work has not even approximated a definite study. . . . The best of the field's studies, its champions of rationality, come apart under even perfunctory review. (Epstein, 2002, p. 1).

Social work's commitment to quantitative methodology has not made it more competitive, nor has it increased its credibility in the eyes of other disciplines. Scales employed in quantitative research are typically imported from other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, political science or organizational behavior. Moreover, social work studies are rarely cited outside the discipline or are duplicated within the profession, no less outside of it.

If social worker's aspire to regain their former status as public intellectuals, they must develop research methodologies relevant to the mission of the profession. These methodologies should focus on the strengths of the profession; namely, its concern with social justice and direct contact with clients. No single methodology will move the profession closer to greater legitimation (Stoesz, 2003). Although specialization may be appropriate at times, social work educators should be encouraged to move from narrow

research topics into broader areas with greater social salience and a wider audience.

During the early 20th century, social workers led the drive to develop bold socially relevant research. In particular, the early days of the profession were marked by important and innovative research, known as the social survey movement (Zimbalist, 1977; Chambers, 1971). According to Mullen (2002), early social work research looked outward at social conditions rather than inward at professional intervention. The themes of this research centered around quantitative studies on the causes and prevalence of poverty; descriptive surveys documenting the social condition of the urban poor; the development of measures to describe social conditions like economic dependency and social need (e.g., social indicators); and a variety of research efforts directed at describing multi-problem families (Zimbalist, 1977). Research did not focus on examining the effectiveness of social work; instead, it was grounded in the belief that social workers needed to understand the problems of the poor if they were going to change their lives through social policy and social action.

The social survey movement was a response to the emerging urban problems chronicled by settlement houses. It was also a reaction to the work of 19th and 20th century crusading journalists, such as Jacob Riis, Lincoln Steffens, Paul Kellogg, Upton Sinclair and others. In that sense, the social survey movement blended journalistic fervor with social science research methods. The movement became so popular that by 1914 more than 100 cities in 34 states were involved in social surveys (Zimbalist, 1977). Despite its flaws, the social survey movement was influential in shaping social policy and public opinion. As Mary van Kleeck wrote, "the development of workmen's compensation may be traced to interest which was stimulated by the Pittsburgh Survey" (van Kleeck, p. 422).

However flawed, the social survey movement reflected the acknowledgment by social work leaders that contributing to public life, public discourse, and furthering social justice was an important goal (Zimbalist, 1977). Eventually, the survey movement was abandoned because it lacked rigorous scientific methodology. The movement clearly contained too much journalism to make it scientifically acceptable for a profession struggling for legitimacy

(von Tungen, 1927). Although social work cannot resurrect the social survey movement, much can be learned about formulating research problems that advance the profession while appealing to the interests of the larger public.

Conclusion

Early social work reformers saw themselves as the conscience of the nation. Nowadays, social work can advance beyond narrow professional and academic confines and come closer to its original mission of social reform. The profession can accomplish this by overcoming professional exclusivity and reassessing the goals and expectations of social work education. Strategies can be developed to help social workers become vital participants in public discourse. To this end, social work faculty should be encouraged to disseminate research in diverse formats such as newspaper editorials, radio and television interviews, magazine articles and through authoring trade or general readership books. In turn, non-refereed articles and general audience trade books should be treated as research not service. The criteria for tenure, promotion and merit should also be tailored to enhance its relevancy to the social justice mission of the profession. This does not imply that social work faculty should be absolved of research responsibilities. On the contrary, research is central to the intellectual life of the profession.

This is an opportune time for social work to develop a cadre of public intellectuals, especially since many social science disciplines have become virtually irrelevant in public life. Once in the forefront of public intellectual life, sociology has been reduced to a service discipline in many universities because of its near obsession with arcane quantitative methods and its prolonged bouts of internecine warfare. While political science once spawned respected commentators on public life, many of today's political scientists have been demoted to conducting electoral or public opinion polls. As such, political scientists have become measurers rather than shapers of American political opinion. The current poverty in academia permeates most social science disciplines, and their retreat into narrower and more technical domains opens a window of opportunity for social work to lead rather than

follow. Moreover, the conservatism that has riddled American life, including much of academia, has resulted in scores of academic and intellectual refugees. Social work can help beleaguered progressives by welcoming them into the profession. This cross-fertilization would not only assist intellectual fugitives, but would breathe new life into social work education and the profession in general. Social work has an opportunity to create its own research niche, one that fuses social concerns with innovative and exciting research methodologies. In short, the profession is at an important crossroads. It can either continue on the current path and sink deeper into irrelevancy, or it can be proactive and develop its own unique agenda. If social work chooses the latter, it can become an example for other disciplines, while at the same time, reclaiming the glory of its past.

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Informal care—two-tiered care? The work of family members and friends in hospitals and cancer centres

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In a qualitative study conducted in Ontario, Canada, family members and friends of ill people defined a normal territory in which care from health professionals could not be counted on to be timely, effective or empathic. Under these conditions relatives and friends took on considerable responsibility, both for providing care and for securing care from health professionals. Yet considerable variation was apparent in this study in the sense respondents had of their own capacities to provide and secure care. Findings from this study suggest that service tiers exist in the institutional care system, linked to the time, knowledge and resources of informal carers.

Key words: family care, social welfare reform, informal care, two-tiered care, end-of-life care

Introduction

Five analytically distinct dimensions of informal care—"the informality of informal care"—are elaborated by Graham (1991 p 508). Informal care is 1) provided for others 2) non-institutional 3) unpaid 4) provided through bonds of kinship and friendship 5) related to the care of individuals with a long-term need for help and support, individuals who might otherwise require institutional care.

The care that relatives and friends provide to people with advanced breast cancer maps onto the dimensions Graham identifies, with a few important caveats. First, Graham's framework

conflates the situation of a long-term need for help and support with the 'otherwise' requirement for institutional care. On average, people diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer live between two and three and a half years (Love, 1995), and many do not require care "beyond the normal reciprocities" (Twigg & Atkin, 1994, p. 8) for this entire time. Yet compared to other causes of death, metastatic cancer is associated with intense symptoms and restrictions (Seale, 1990). If they were not cared for at home, many people would be in hospital. In Canada, as in other industrialised countries, most people do die in hospital, and yet most dying takes place at home (Rhodes & Shaw, 1999). It is not necessarily the case, then, that an illness need be long term for the person with that illness to hover at the edges of institutional care.

Secondly, and more to the point of this paper, Graham's (1991, p. 508) analysis reflects the broad consensus of policy and research literature that:

Informal care is non-institutional care . . . However informal the atmosphere and however caring the relationships, care within hospitals or within residential homes is not defined as informal care. Instead, the term is restricted to care within the 'informal sector', differentiated from the state, market and voluntary sector by its base within the social relations of family and community.

In this framing of informal care, Graham collapses the location of care and its providers¹: care in institutions is equated with care from professionals. This conceptualisation obscures the ways care in institutions is, perhaps more and more, based within "the social relations of family and community"—the ways care in hospitals, for instance, is ensured, and often provided, by relatives and friends of ill people.

Over the last fifteen years Canadian governments, like other western welfare states, have been pressed to adopt programs of debt reduction (for discussion of the decline in the relative autonomy of the state accompanying globalization, see Coburn, 1999). As the single largest item in the provincial health care budget, hospitals have been a primary focus for both health reform and privatization: one in six hospitals across the province has shut down and almost 7500 beds have been closed (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1999; Bezanson & Noce, 1999). As well, and especially pertinent to this paper, 2,500 fewer nurses were employed in

1998 than in 1991 (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1999). A study released by the Caledon Institute of Social Policy (Bezanson & Noce, 1999) notes that continuity of care has been disrupted by hospital mergers and closures, with information about individual patients inadequately transferred. More generally, this study reports, both accessibility and universality of hospital care have decreased.

Tracking shifts in government policy, researchers have attended to the implications for the informal care sector of contractionist social welfare policies (see, for instance Graham, 1991; McKeever, 1996). They have also spoken to the considerable strain that individual relatives and friends experience while providing home-based care in a service context designed not to offer them genuine options or meaningful support, but rather to maintain them in their roles (Hooyman & Gonyea, 1995). Yet few researchers have examined informal care within institutions, considered how it too might be affected by welfare retrenchment, or examined its implications for equity in care.

In this study, in the context of welfare retrenchment, family members and friends of ill people perceived that care from health professionals could not be counted on to be timely, effective or empathic. Under these conditions relatives and friends took on considerable responsibility, both for providing care and for securing care from health professionals. Yet considerable variation was apparent in this study in the sense respondents had of their own capacities to provide and secure care. Findings from this study suggest that service tiers exist in the institutional care system, linked to the time, knowledge and resources of informal carers.

Research purpose, sample and methods

The accounts presented here are drawn from a qualitative study with people who provided end-of-life care to a relative or friend who died of breast cancer. Carers were sought who had been involved in, or witnessed, interactions with formal service providers, who lived in south central Ontario, and who spoke English. In an effort to draw upon memories of specific interactions, the study identified people who cared for someone who had died within the past three years. Respondents were recruited with the assistance of oncology nurses, staff at hospices and Community Care Access Centres (CCACs, publicly funded

agencies that assess service eligibility and oversees its provision), and through informal social networks. Intermediaries were asked to use their judgement in order not to involve someone in the study who would be especially distressed by the interview.

The study aimed to achieve a sample with variability along the standard social categories of gender, age, socio-economic status, ethnicity and religious affiliation, as well as in the size of community in which the respondent lived. In the literature on informal care, kinship position is central both to the process of becoming a carer and to the care experience (Hooyman & Gonyea, 1995). The study also attempted, then, to ensure that a range of relationships between the carer and cared-for person would be reflected.

Eight women and five men participated in the study, among them seven spouses (five husbands, one lesbian partner, and one wife), two sisters, three friends, and one daughter. The age of the respondents ranged from 41 to 73, and of the person who died, from 46 to 77; more than half of the respondents were between 50 and 58. The income category \$40K–\$49K was selected by more respondents than any other category, while three respondents reported a total household income between \$20K and \$29K and two reported income in excess of \$100K. Most of the carers had post-secondary education; for two, secondary school was the highest education level completed. Three respondents lived in large urban centres, four in mid-sized communities (population between 100,000 and 499,000) and three each in small (30,000–99,000) and rural (population less than 30,000) communities. All were born in Canada and responded to a question about ethnicity with either 'white' or British heritage. The lack of variation by ethnicity represents a limitation on this study.

Two interviews were conducted with each of 12 study participants, and one carer responded by letter to a series of questions drawn from the interview guide. Initial interviews, which lasted between one and two-and-a-half hours, encouraged the respondent to 'tell the story' of caring for the person who had died. Prompt questions focused on times when respondents found themselves doing more for the other person; on shifts in the relationship between the carer and the ill person; and on moments of strain and reward or ease in caring. Second interviews (between a half-hour and one hour in duration) clarified respon-

dents' earlier comments and further explored their responses to and assessments of interactions with health professionals. In second interviews, in keeping with qualitative research principles for establishing or improving the credibility of research reports (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Seale, 1999), respondents were also asked to comment on emerging conceptual models. The interviews were conducted in respondents' homes or in rooms in nearby cancer treatment centres or service agencies.

Accounts were analysed with reference to grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In a departure from grounded theory, however, this study aimed less to create a conceptually dense rendering at any particular 'level' in a transactional system (see Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 158–164), than to define pathways between social structures and individual actions, experiences and accounts. Data management was facilitated by the qualitative software package NVivo.

This study initially took as its central question, How do carers' perceptions of formal health services and their subjective experience of caring for someone who is dying, influence one another? The research was intended to illuminate ways that informal end-of-life care is shaped by and through the meanings carers draw from interactions with professionals. Yet as data analysis proceeded, it became clear that informal carers, while clearly affected by what health professionals said and did, also saw themselves affecting health professionals—affecting health professionals actions and perceptions, and ultimately affecting the care the ill person received. Initially focused on the question of how carers' experiences are shaped by interactions with health professionals, this paper takes up what emerged as the more salient theme: how, in a context of system constraint, relatives and friends perceive themselves to be shaping the level and nature of care an ill person receives, and the consequences of this for equity in care.

Results

In this study, respondents' commentary on conditions in the health system often took the form of assertions about the difficult working conditions faced by health professionals in hospitals

and cancer centres. In a typical comment, one respondent said, "they've got so much to do and there's so few of them" (V).

In this section I show how the common assertion that they are "busy" or "run off their feet"² tended to release health professionals from certain care duties. More centrally, I examine the myriad ways that the people who took part in this study assumed responsibility for the care tasks from which health professionals were released.

Providing care

In many instances, participants in this study took it upon themselves to provide hands-on care to relatives and friends in hospitals and cancer centres. In other instances, they described working in tandem with nurses to provide care for the ill person.

In her narrative about caring for her partner, L described arriving at the hospital at seven o'clock each morning to provide practical care: helping G on the commode, getting basins so she could brush her teeth and wash her face. L did not suggest that G would not have had these basic needs met, had she not been there; just that she would have had to wait. In this regard L describes watching as the other women in G's hospital room rang for a nurse, and then waited:

It just seemed like a long time . . . One woman sat on the edge of the bed and she'd just wait. She'd just sit waiting for someone to come and I really believe it's because they don't have the staff. . . . If they had to go to the bathroom—and these are cancer patients, these are people that maybe they can't hold it you know that sort of/ I mean G wouldn't have been able to wait.

L saw her decision to ensure that G did not wait partly in the category of "catering" to G's "whims," "mothering her to pieces." Yet L also judged nurses unable to respond to patients' needs in a timely way. Her caring work, then, was partly in aid of averting the real possibility of G's discomfort and distress.

Recalling the care he provided for his wife, another study participant, F, said:

There were a couple of times that I needed help, like if she really had a messy . . . whatever and the bed needed changing. But throughout

the night I, I was there, I got her up, I put her back down. And it helped them—understaffed and overworked and everything else.

Here F does not call upon the nurses to help his wife, nor to fulfil their professional roles, but rather to help him—to assist him when he is unable to complete care tasks alone. Nurses, “understaffed and overworked,” are released from responsibility for routine care; even in this hospital setting, F frames primary responsibility for his wife’s care as his own.

In a few instances participants in this study described working directly with health professionals to provide specific kinds of routine care. R, for example, would assist the nurses to turn her friend K in bed. Sometimes she moved to help simply because she was there, and not busy; in this way, her assistance was, as she says, “automatic.” Yet it was also clear to R that prompt nursing care for her friend was sometimes contingent on her own willingness and capacity to help:

I’d say, ‘it’s time for her to be turned, she needs to be turned.’ And they said, ‘well, we’re just in the middle of something, unless you want to help me, it’s going to be like 20 minutes,’ or whatever and I said, ‘OK, I’ll help you.’

Here, divisions of labour between formal and informal carers are explicitly negotiated, with R agreeing to stand in for a health professional. That relatives and friends of ill people perceived themselves to be working alongside—or even in place of—nurses, was evident in other passages of R’s talk:

I’d check out with [the nursing staff] because it got so that we didn’t stay through the night. And I’d just like you know, you’d stay till 11:30 or 12 and then you’d go. And I’d let them know I was going, that K was on her own.

The comings and goings of friends and relatives from an ill person’s bedside are constructed here, and in other respondents’ talk, as a shift change. Seale (1995) has pointed to the profound cultural and personal significance for relatives and friends of terminally ill people—indeed, the moral norm—of ‘accompaniment.’ Where the effects of health system constraint are visible to relatives and friends, accompaniment of someone who is dying increasingly seems to necessitate the adoption of nursing roles.

Writing in a Canadian context and particularly considering the area of long-term care, McKeever (1996, p. 200) notes that deficit reducing social policies over the past two decades have led to reallocations of work, with the work of family caregivers increasingly "appropriated from the domestic sphere and substituted for formerly paid nursing work." The accounts in this section show McKeever's analysis unfolding at a micro level, in institutional settings. In many instances, an awareness of conditions in the health system prompted relatives and friends to take up tasks that would otherwise be performed by hospital or cancer centre staff.

As I have described here, informal carers sometimes accommodate health system constraint by providing care themselves. Yet also very significant in this study were accounts of securing care from health professionals. It is to these accounts that I now turn.

Securing care

In their book, *Carers Perceived: Policy and Practice in Informal Care*, Twigg and Atkin (1994) discuss the range of ways that health professionals incorporate informal carers into their practice. This section takes up the question of how, in conditions of health system constraint, informal carers incorporate *themselves* into *health professionals'* practice in an effort to secure care. Respondents accounts of themselves, their actions and activities in this regard, can be organised into three general categories: progress chasing, becoming known, and trading services.

Progress chasing

'Progress chasing' was a term used by a study participant, M, to describe his relationship to the health professionals involved in his wife's care. As he put it, "progress chasing is, you know, we got this to do next, OK, well, is it happening?" For the purposes of this analysis, progress chasing includes the actions of monitoring and reporting on the ill person's condition, tracking care schedules, and, when necessary, intervening in the care provided by health professionals.

Participants in this study commonly described watching the ill person for signs of discomfort. Sometimes this monitoring was

described in quite offhand ways, presented simply as a function of being in the room. Others described a very active attention to physical changes. In some cases, the attention an informal carer devoted to understanding symptoms and care routines was explicitly connected to awareness of nurses' working conditions:

I have notes of every day . . . everything. How many pills she's taken, when did she have a bowel movement, colour of her skin, temperature, everything. Because they [nurses] can't. They got 110 patients. (M)

The monitoring informal carers provided meant that in many, many instances, they became involved in locating a health professional and drawing her or his attention to the ill person's discomfort. R, for instance, recalled noticing changes in her friend's breathing, and going to "track [the nurses] down." Respondents also commonly ensured that routine care was provided in a timely way, taking note of when the ill person's medications were to be given, for instance, or when she or he was to be turned in bed, and seeking a nurse if one did not appear. From respondents' perspectives, the monitoring and tracking they undertook secured health professional attention to the ill person's care needs, both routine and not. It also served to establish their credibility, and thus enable more substantive interventions in the care health professionals provided. D, at her friend's bedside for hours, found she could suggest that a breakthrough dose of pain medication was warranted "and 9 times out of 10 they [the nurses] said, 'yeah, I think that's what we should do.'"

The account M offered of his progress chasing on a hospital ward is set against his description of specialised palliative care. Distinctions between the two settings were perhaps most apparent as he spoke about a phone call he received from a palliative care nurse, telling him that his wife had little time left to live. The call was important to him for a variety of reasons, one of which was the statement it made about the nursing care his wife was receiving:

What it also said was, they were in touch with her at all times. Palliative is at all times. Acute is when you ring the buzzer. Well, I can't ring the buzzer, right. What if the caregiver isn't there? Well

that person may not have the right care at that moment in time, you know. Very different.

M did not, as he said, go “tearing my hair out going to the hospital” when he received this call. Partly this was because he believed his wife would die when she was ready to die. It was also, however, because he knew the nurses were “in touch with her at all times.” Alongside earlier accounts, M’s comments here make apparent the embeddedness, in broader health system conditions, of carers’ decisions and actions. With health professional care entirely reliable, relatives and friends can act out of a desire to be with ill people in hospitals and cancer centres, rather than out of the conviction that their absence allows for inadequate care. In this study, as I discuss elsewhere, the awareness that health care was unreliable³ created an imperative for relatives and friends to be present with the ill person (Sinding, 2003).

Becoming known

Almost without exception, participants in this study commented on the value of being or becoming known as an individual to health professionals. Sometimes a health professional’s knowledge of the patient or informal carer was simply cited as a factor in her or his supportive actions. In other instances, becoming known was described as a deliberate strategy to secure (better) care. Becoming known gained particular importance in relation to conditions in the health system: conditions of constraint, and conditions that tend to depersonalise patients.

In talking about the relationship she saw between her sister and the health professionals who treated her, C drew upon her own experience of receiving care for a serious chronic illness:

I would go dressed so that they’d notice me. And maybe she in her own way was doing that too . . . Because it’s like really really important that people, that people recognise you. Because I think that it, it just, I think it makes the whole thing/ it lightens the whole thing a bit . . . You know that it’s serious, and you know that you’ve got this terrible disease. But there’s something about nurses coming in with smiles on their faces . . . that I think that it just makes it not all so bad and so serious.

C made a point of saying that she did not perceive this kind of rapport between health professionals and patients as especially

common; her sister, she said, “obviously made an impact.” She also credited her sister’s husband for how the nurses and physicians acted:

He would take them stuff, and even afterwards, he’d pop in and see them you know, even after she was finished treatment . . . I think it was maybe a lot about him too, you know.

C perceived that the nurses, prompted and supported by the ill woman and her husband, created a kind of social situation, a valued sense of being among friends. The flip side of this analysis was also apparent to C. When her sister was moved to a ward, “I didn’t see the same sort of caring and stuff . . . But then they wouldn’t have known her in the same way either. She was just another one of those dying bodies up there.”

C’s comments here echo those of several other respondents, who set the value of being known against representations of hospitals and health care systems as factories, routinised and impersonal. R, for instance, commented on the kinds of perfunctory caring that she witnessed, occasioned, as she suggests, by nurses’ working conditions:

Sometimes they just, and I realise they’re busy and everything, but they almost do it by rote, or they do it, it doesn’t/ There’s just not that emotional investment, it’s just some body to turn. That’s what it is.

Both C and R described instances where ill people became ‘just bodies.’ In this study, being known emerged as a defence against conditions in health systems that render health professionals’ actions absent of personal engagement with the patient, and thus render patients ‘just bodies.’

Being known was also linked, in respondents’ accounts, to swift responses by health professionals to care concerns. F’s account of an oncologist saying the he would “like to start chemo immediately”—even prior to certain test results, F notes—was followed by a passage about the esteem in which the medical team had held his wife. M, recalling a time when an outbreak of a hospital virus halted patient transfers between sections of the hospital, notes that he made a deliberate point then of telling nurses on the palliative care ward that a family wedding was on

the horizon. M's wife was promptly transferred, and, as M said, "had we been silent, had it been just another patient going to transfer, we wouldn't have gotten there then." M saw his action of alerting the nursing staff to the upcoming wedding as elevating his wife from being "just another" patient, just "number 62 being transferred," as he said later. Above, 'just a body' receives care devoid of empathy; here, 'just a number' waits for care. Being known, it seems, acts against prevailing conditions in health systems to secure care that is both emotionally engaged, and swift.

Twigg and Atkin (1994), in their analysis of the relationship between informal and formal care providers, note that nurses tend to incorporate informal carers into their practice on the basis of *amplification*—training or transmitting knowledge such that the limited input of nurses can be enlarged and strengthened by the carer her or himself. In this study, we can see the ways that informal carers sought or achieved a kind of amplification of themselves, as they and the ill person became known to health professionals. Informal care conflates care 'about' with care 'for' (Graham, 1983); it is because we care about a relative or friend that we provide care for her or him. Respondents in this study, discussing how they and the ill person became known to health professionals, seemed to apply (or attempt to apply) a central tenet of informal care to the labour of health professionals: if health professionals knew the ill person and thus came to care *about* them, the theory seemed to go, their attentive, responsive and loving care *for* the ill person would also be secured.

Trading services

In several instances participants in the study spoke of 'helping' health professionals. As discussed earlier, assisting a nurse or physician was one of the ways that informal carers ensured that the ill person's care needs were met in a timely way. The move to help, however, also established a basis of reciprocity that was perceived to secure health professionals' labour and responsiveness.

In a passage quoted above, F describes staying with his wife during the nights at the hospital, and providing care for her: "And it helped them, understaffed and overworked and everything else." F went on to link the nurses' appreciation for his help

to subsequent positive interactions with them. Trying to sort through documentation about his wife's medication after she was transferred between hospitals, he phoned one of the nurses whom he had 'helped.' He described his pleasure that she remembered his first name, and commented on how she dealt with his request: "it was almost like having personal service or whatever, but she immediately went and got what we needed." The informal carers' assistance to nurses, then, especially important in relation to their difficult working conditions, was also seen to facilitate future responsiveness to care needs. Similarly, for D, assisting with hands-on care was a very concrete way in which she worked to ensure her friend's needs were met. This assistance was also, however, perceived as helpful to the nurses, something they appreciated, and thus as a kind of inducement to their services:

The nurse would come in and say, 'oh, good, you're here.' I think they were more prepared to give her some extra time, maybe in the middle of the night if nobody was there, because they knew that during the day I'd be there (D).

Variation in carers' capacities to secure care

Considerable variation existed in this study in the sense respondents had of their own capacity to affect health professionals and secure care. In a few instances study respondents perceived a link between their capacity to affect health professionals, and their (or the ill person's) social location. L, for instance, noted that she always made a point of telling health professionals that she and her partner had been together for twenty years. L foregrounded the established nature of their relationships—foregrounded, that is, the ways their relationship conformed to dominant family values—in an effort to ensure that health professionals "would not slight me in any way." That their relationship had lasted twenty years was, as L says, "my only ace in the hole," her only source of confidence and security against professionals' assumptions about gay and lesbian relationships. She could reveal this 'ace' and health professionals would be more likely, she felt, to defer, to take her as family and thus confirm her capacity to affect G's care. In her own narrative, B perceived that young people with cancer may be especially likely to move health professionals to action, and especially likely to garner health system resources.

When an oncologist discouraged B's mother from pursuing further treatment, B attributed his reluctance to a belief that "there's no point in treating for a 10 per cent chance when you're 73."

The link between social location and an individuals' perceived capacity to affect health professionals in positive ways is perhaps most evident in the contrast between M's and S's accounts. When M first used the term 'progress chasing' to describe his interactions with nurses, I told him that it was a new term for me. He explained:

I used to do this with suppliers, I'd say, well, I know my suppliers are not going to call me with a quotation. They're just not going to do it. Well, how am I going to get it? I got to ring them. I expect to ring them. I expect to do half their job.

M's expectation, in relation to nurses, that he would 'do half their job' translated, from his standpoint, into a thorough and effective program of positively affecting health professionals and securing care. His narrative clearly reflects a comfort and familiarity with managing resources, and people. "My job," he said, "was to get the very best I can out of the greatest people they've got here [at the cancer centre] . . . and the worst."

In marked contrast to the confidence and ease M expressed in securing health professional care, S describes feeling "horribly clumsy" about caring for her sister. Approaching nurses was not easy: "I always felt like you're bothering them," she said. "You'd approach that nursing station cautiously." Talking about her sister's bedsores, S takes considerable responsibility; as she said, "I just want to know what we should be doing for her." Her position here is parallel to M's: it is her job to 'do half their job.' And yet, as she says, she did not have sufficient knowledge or training to do this well, and her sister suffered for it.

Yet quite aside from the particular competencies each brought to the role of informal carer was the contrast in M and S's life situations. Progress chasing, by its nature, requires a familiarity with the day-to-day unfolding of a situation, its possibilities and their likely outcomes and remedies. Such familiarity is only gained in this context when informal carers are able to be at ill people's bedsides over time. M, a successful independent businessperson, was able to relinquish all formal work responsibilities to care for

his wife. S, raising two children on her own and facing work deadlines that her supervisor would not shift, was in quite a different position in relation to her sister's care. M is an entrepreneur, accustomed to making things happen, well versed in strategies that rally people around his own goals. In his interactions with health professionals he relied upon knowledge, deeply embedded in culture and class, about how to secure the best effort of people working in circumstances that impede them from offering it. He was also, however, in a position to bring his knowledge and skills to bear on his wife's situation. Obviously, as well, the capacity to offer "a big donation" to a hospital, as T did, is rare, and clearly a reflection of class position; so too, are the social and professional ties with senior hospital administrators that another respondent, H, drew upon to secure care for his wife.

Even among people who deeply desire to care for a relative or friend in the best possible way, then, clear differences are apparent in the extent to which they are able to do so—differences that appear, in this study, to be patterned by class and gender, though of course a larger study would be required to fully explore this association. In this regard it is also worth noting that several respondents, reflecting on their own situations, wondered aloud how people who do not speak English or who are recent immigrants to Canada manage when a relative or friend is hospitalised. In the context of their overall narratives, it seemed that these comments did not only reflect a concern about the communication at a literal level between health professionals, patients and carers, or about how information regarding available services is transmitted and received. Rather, comments along these lines may well reflect respondents' implicit understanding of the levels of culture and class-linked skill and knowledge they exercised in the process of securing care for their ill relative or friend.

Conclusion

Certainly it is in their responsibility for care tasks in the home that relatives and friends of disabled, elderly and ill people most clearly experience the effects of—and, indeed, find themselves accommodating—welfare retrenchment. In the study presented here, yet more of the accommodations individual citizens under-

take in relation to contractionist social welfare policies become apparent.

In recent Canadian research, increasing patient-to-nurse ratios have been associated with nurses' implicit rationing of care (Bourgeault et al, 2002). The study presented in this paper draws our attention to the ways informal carers also participate in the allocation and the rationing of nursing care resources. In hospitals and cancer centres the strain of inadequate staff resources on nurses and physicians is apparent to informal carers. Care by health professionals is commonly assessed, then, as unreliable: it may be timely, proactive and empathic, or it may not; adequate care may well be provided by professionals, but it cannot be assumed. In this context, ill people and their relatives and friends undertake responsibilities of considerable range and substance. In some instances, relatives and friends provided care themselves, or assisted nurses; more commonly, and in an impressive range of ways—by progress chasing, becoming known, and trading their services—they acted as bridges between the ill person's care needs and care from professionals.

The importance in this study of informal carers' roles in ensuring health care for ill relatives and friends begs the question, of course, of what happens when ill people do not have relatives and friends with them in hospital. As Graham (1991) points out, the giving of care in the informal sector reflects the obligations of carers rather than the statutory rights of dependants. The informal sector is "unable to establish *rights* to support; it is only the public sector that can implement and secure rights" (Walker, 1987, p. 380). People with limited or fractured social networks are denied access to informal care.

In the context of the current study, to be denied access to informal care is not only to be denied access to the labour and support of relatives and friends: it is also to have access to the attention and empathy of health professionals compromised. In Canada, universality and accessibility are key principles of health care. Yet insofar as the findings of this study speak to general processes, the level and timing of health care in Canada, and the extent to which it is 'caring' in an affective sense, are increasingly contingent on informal carers and on ill people themselves. Formal care is, thus, unequally distributed amongst the population—accruing more

readily to people with informal carers, and unequally distributed by the capacities and resources of informal carers themselves. Despite continuing declarations on the part of public officials that two-tier health care will not be tolerated in Canada, findings from this study suggest that service tiers exist in the institutional care system, linked to the time, knowledge and resources of informal carers.

Notes

1. Graham herself, of course, has called for feminist analyses of caring that draw conceptual distinctions between the location and social relations of care. Reflecting on work by Carby (1982), Graham (1991a) considers the case of domestic service—the work often done by Black women for and in White families—to claim that feminist research, fusing location and the social relations of care, has obscured forms of home-based care not anchored in kinship and marriage. Here, I make a parallel claim: that fusing location with the social relations of care has obscured forms of *institution-based* care that *are* anchored in kinship, marriage and friendship.
2. Interestingly, while physicians and nurses were both described as “busy” in this study, the phrases “run off their feet” or “not having enough hands” were attached exclusively to nurses. The demands on nurses are such that, at least metaphorically, they are pushed beyond the limits of their physical bodies.
3. I trust it is clear that in using the term ‘unreliable’ I do not intend to connote moral judgement in relation to health professionals, but rather simply to assert that respondents in this study did not perceive that they could count on health professionals to provide prompt, high-quality, empathic health care. This does not mean, of course, that such care was never received; very often, it was. And yet, consistent in the accounts presented here, was the sense that it could not be assumed.

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Economic Well-being of Single Mothers: Work First or Postsecondary Education?

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This article investigates the relationship between single mothers' education and their economic well-being. Through the analysis of the 1993 Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) data, we examine the effect of education on a sample of White and African American single mothers. The results indicate that past work experience is a weak predictor of current economic well-being. Having education, particularly postsecondary education, on the other hand, significantly improves their economic status. The results challenge the "work-first" approach to alleviating poverty and provide more support for designing policies to develop human capital.

Key words: postsecondary education, welfare reform, single mothers, economic well-being

American family structure has changed in the past four decades due to a rise in the divorce rate and a rise in never married women with children. Mother-only families have become increasingly common. In 1960, non-married women headed about 9 percent of families with children; by 1999 the number was over 20 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1961, 2000). In the meantime, female-headed households consistently comprised a large proportion of poor households. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, female-headed families with children were five times more likely to be poor than two-parent families with children (Furstenberg,

1990; Garfinkel & McLanahan, 1986; Nichols-Casebolt & Krysik, 1997; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). In 2000, 35.1 percent of female-headed families with children under 18 lived in poverty, compared with 6.9 percent of married-couples with children under 18. In the same year, female-headed households with children under 18 comprised 52 percent of all poor households with children under 18 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001).

Given the rise of single-mother families, it is important to examine factors that contribute to the economic well-being of these families. Studies indicate that reasons for the low economic well-being of female-headed households include low earning capacity of single mothers, low job opportunity in the neighborhoods where they reside, inadequate enforcement of child support, and meager public benefits (McLanahan & Booth, 1989; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Nichols-Casebolt & Krysik, 1997; Rocha, 1997). A less often cited factor, but probably one of the most important to the economic well-being, is the low level of human capital, especially the lack of higher education, of single mothers. For a married woman living with her husband, her lower level of educational attainment and earning may not be a problem since there is a spouse to help provide for the incomes of the family; however, her earning alone become insufficient in single-mother families (Mauldin & Koonce, 1990). The work requirements and time limits of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 have further reduced options for poor women's postsecondary education (U.S. Congress, 1996). The PROWRA emphasizes "work first" strategy and allows women only up to 12 months of vocational training while on welfare. It is important to understand the role of postsecondary education on women's economic status and its role in comparison to work experiences.

Much of the past research has compared economic status of female-headed families with married families. For example, much attention has been given to the high poverty rates in female-headed households and the negative economic consequences of divorce on women and their children. These studies did not pay much attention to the within-group variations of female-headed households (Richards & Schmiede, 1993). To examine the variation of economic well-being within similar types of households

is helpful in locating strengths some female-headed families may have to buffer the risk of poverty and other vulnerabilities. If there are strengths within this group of families, future policy can either replicate or target the strengths to mitigate vulnerability among these families.

This study aims to examine the relationship between mothers' education and the economic well-being in female-headed households. It also compares the roles of postsecondary education and work experience in the economic status of single mothers. Specifically, there are three main questions examined in this study: 1) How does single mothers' educational attainment affect their economic well-being? What is the role of employment-related factors? 2) Does education have the same or different patterns of influence on White and African American single mothers? 3) Are single mothers with postsecondary education economically better off compared to those without postsecondary education?

Literature Review

As mentioned, while it is well documented that female-headed families are more likely to experience poverty, fewer studies have analyzed various factors that might augment or diminish the negative effects on the economic status of single mothers. With a few exceptions (Nichols-Casebolt & Krysik, 1997; Rocha, 1997), these studies have focused on divorced women, and they suggested that several resources and characteristics might enhance a single mothers' ability to provide financially for her family.

Factors of human capital

Human capital theory implies that investment in human capital can raise future returns in the labor market even though it may entail opportunity costs in forgone short-term earnings (Becker, 1993; Mincer, 1979, 1989; Schultz, 1993). Human capital usually refers to education, work experience, and on-the-job training. According to human capital theory, education is associated with single mothers' economic well-being in two ways. First, higher educated women have higher earnings and occupational status (Bernhardt & Dresser, 2002; Blau, 1998; Thompson, 1993; U.S. Department of Labor, 1997). The wage gap between workers with college degrees and those without college degrees has widened

in recent years (Amott, 1994; Mishel, Bernstein & Schmitt, 1996). It is well known that real income has declined since 1980 for all demographic groups except college graduates (Farley, 1996). A majority of women without postsecondary education work at jobs that pay a lower wage and/or offer fewer benefits after they leave welfare (Cancian, 2001; Pandey, Zhan, Neely-Barnes, & Menon, 2000; Strawn, 1998). Second, educated women generally tend to marry educated men. Therefore, upon divorce or separation, educated women's former spouses tend to provide more in child support and alimony and upon becoming widows these women tend to receive more financial resources from their marriage compared to less educated women (Mauldin & Koonce, 1990). Human capital theory also implies that work experience and on-the-job training are positively related to earnings (Mincer, 1962; Mincer & Polachek, 1974).

Empirical studies consistently indicate that educational attainment, especially post-secondary education, positively affects the economic well-being of single mothers (Bae, Choy, Geddes, Sable, & Snyder, 2000; Dixon & Rettig, 1994; Katz, 1991; Mauldin, 1990, 1991; Mauldin & Koonce, 1990; Rocha, 1997; Smock, 1993, 1994). For example, Bae et al. (2000) examined data between 1970 and 1997 and documented that annual median incomes were substantially higher for women with postsecondary education compared to those without it. Mauldin and Koonce (1990) estimated the per capita income of divorced or separated single mothers, and found that compared to women with less than 8 years of education, those with a Bachelor's degree had higher incomes, for both White and African American women. Similarly, Dixon and Rettig (1994) suggested that single mothers with a college degree were more likely to find employment and earn above poverty income after divorce. A study tracing the poverty status and welfare use of those who had exited from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) concluded that women with higher earning potential, especially with higher education, achieved higher levels of economic success (Meyer & Cancian, 1998). Another longitudinal study of former welfare recipients also concluded that those who had postsecondary education were significantly less likely to return to welfare compared to those who have not completed a high school degree (Harris, 1996).

Studies consistently found that employed single mothers and those with more work hours had higher incomes (Dixon & Rettig, 1994; Mauldin, 1990; Morgan, 1989; Smock, 1993, 1994). The findings on the impact of single mothers' prior work history were mixed. Some studies showed that divorced women who had worked more years or worked full-time prior to divorce experienced less economic hardship (Bianchi, Subaiya, & Kahn, 1999; Mauldin & Koonce, 1990). Some other studies did not find statistically significant effects of single mothers' work experience on their economic well-being (Dixon & Rettig, 1994; Mauldin, 1990; Smock, 1993, 1994). Findings on the effects of job training are also mixed (Mauldin, 1990; Mauldin & Koonce, 1990).

In sum, human capital investment in women, especially in the form of education, is a strong and consistent predictor of their economic status. The strength of this relationship between women's higher education and their economic status is important to understand as more and more families are headed by women with children.

Factors of non-human capital

In addition to the factors related to human capital, studies have also examined the role of some demographic factors in single mothers' economic status. These factors include women's age, race, marital status, the presence of children, and other adults living in households. Studies found that African American single mothers were economically worse off than their White counterparts, after controlling for other demographic characteristics (Mauldin, 1990, 1991; Morgan, 1989; Smock, 1993). Studies also found that older single mothers were economically better off than younger single mothers (Dixon & Rettig, 1994; Rocha, 1997), and previously married single mothers were better off than never married single mothers (Nichols-Casebolt & Krysik, 1997). Number of children and the presence of young children had negative effects on the economic status of single-mother families (Buehler, Hogan, Robinson, & Levy, 1985; Mauldin, 1991; Mauldin & Koonce, 1990; Morgan, 1989). This implies that the presence of children, especially young children, may limit a woman's ability to participate in the labor force, especially if affordable and quality childcare is unavailable, thus reducing her earning potential.

The presence of other adults in the household might strain a family financially, while at the same time, these adults could contribute income to the household or help the family indirectly by providing childcare. Furthermore, depending on the other adults' health, earning ability, and relationship with the mother and children, they might contribute to the household differentially. Several empirical studies (Smock, 1993, 1994; Sandfort & Hill, 1996) found that single mothers living with at least one parent or other family members fared better than those living by themselves. Further studies in this area may help elaborate the impact of other adults in the economic status of single mothers.

Gaps of the current literature

There are several gaps in the literature that examines the factors contributing to the economic well-being of single mothers. First, although education was included as a variable in some of these studies, the specific role of postsecondary education has been sparsely examined. With the passage of PRWORA in 1996, the federal government drastically limited postsecondary education opportunities for low-income women with children. The legislation implies that investment in postsecondary education of poor women with children is not worth the cost. Therefore, it is worthwhile to accurately address the benefits of investing in postsecondary education of poor women. Second, existing research has either focused on White women only or has included race/ethnicity as a control variable; no study, however, has specifically examined whether or not post-secondary education has differential impact on economic well-being of White and African American single mothers. Third, with a few exceptions, most of the current studies have examined the economic status of divorced or separated women but left out the single mothers who were never married. Never-married mothers are a rapidly growing demographic group (Mauldin, 1990; Nichols-Casebolt & Krysik, 1997; Rawlings & Saluter, 1994). Therefore, the economic well-being of never-married single mothers also needs to be examined. Finally, another difference between the present study and earlier research is that we examine the effect of education on different sources of income of female-headed households instead of total household income, per capita income or income-to-needs

ratio. Because certain sources of income receive wider public approval than others, we think it is more accurate to examine the relationship between education and different types of income. In sum, the goal of our study is to highlight the effect of single mothers' education, especially their postsecondary education, on their economic well-being by race.

Data and Methodology

The data for this study come from the 1993 Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan. The PSID is an ongoing national survey following 5,000 American families since 1968. From this data we extracted all the female heads of household who were unmarried, 64 years old or younger in 1993, and had at least one dependent child under 18 years old living in the household. Those who were disabled or received Social Security Income in 1992 were deleted from the sample. The final sample included 1097 women.

The dependent variables in this study, which measure the economic well-being of the women, include labor income, asset income, house value, welfare income, income received from relatives and non-relatives, and child support per child. These income sources are measured as the dollar amounts the head of household received in 1992. Labor income includes women's labor related income from farm, business, marketing of products from gardening, roomers and boarders, wages from main or extra jobs, and other job-related income. In this study, sources of asset income include income from investment in the form of profit and dividend, interest from savings and trust funds. Welfare income includes Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Food Stamps, income from AFDC, and other welfare income.

Control variables include demographic and employment-related variables. The demographic variables include women's age, race, marital status, number of adults, and number of children under 18 living in household. Age of youngest child was also included. Because only three percent of the women in the sample were widowed, marital status of women was dummy coded into two groups: the women who were never married is

the reference group and coded as 0 and those who were previously married (divorced, separated, or widowed) were coded as 1. Race is also dummy coded (White and African American), and White is the reference group in the regression analyses. Four employment related variables are included in this study: employment status of women in 1992 (employed=1, not employed=0), their total work hours in 1992, and the ratio of the years they had worked full-time or part-time out of the possible years they could work.¹ We also included county unemployment rate as a proxy to control for the effects of neighborhood characteristics on economic well-being of its residents.

The independent variable is respondents' educational attainment. As mentioned, we are particularly interested in understanding how postsecondary education plays out in alleviating poverty among single mothers. Therefore, we created a new nominal level education variable with three categories: less than high school degree (less than 12 years of education), high school degree (12 years of education), and some postsecondary education (more than 12 years of education). In multiple regressions, this variable has been dummy coded, and less than high school degree is a reference group.

Three types of statistical analyses were conducted. First, descriptive analyses were conducted to derive the descriptive information about the sample. Second, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the mean differences of all dependent variables across three different educational groups. Finally, several hierarchical multiple regression models were used in which each of these dependent variables was regressed on control variables and then on the educational attainment. Results of our analyses are presented for all women, White women and African American women.

Results

A demographic profile, employment related information and different sources of income of the sample by race are given in Table 1. The average age of the women was 34. More than half of the single mothers were African American (54%), and previously married (59%). African American mothers were more likely to

Table 1
Demographic characteristics

Variables	Full sample		White women		African American women	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
<i>Continuous Variables</i>						
Age	34	1097	35	377	34	576
Family size	3.4	1097	3.2	377	3.4	576
Number of adults	1.3	1097	1.4	377	1.3	576
Number of children under 18	2.05	1097	1.9	377	2.1	576
Age of youngest children	7	1097	7.6	377	6.6	576
Years of education	11.7	1051	11.8	366	11.9	559
Total work hours	1,134	1097	1,213	377	1,122	576
Ratio of yr full-time worked	.39	1046	.47	359	.36	552
Ratio of yr part-time worked	.10	1013	.10	354	.09	537
County unemployment rate	8	1090	8.1	373	7.7	574
Total labor income (\$)	10,466	1097	12,276	377	9,771	576
Total income from assets (\$)	76.5	1097	73.1	377	95.4	576
House value (\$)	15,533	1097	26,777	377	8,197	576
Total welfare income (\$)	2,517	1097	2,155	377	2,491	576
Support Income (\$)	242	1097	214	377	220	576
Child support per child (\$)	555	1097	1,032	377	305	576
<i>continued</i>						

be never married. Compared to White single mothers, African American mothers had slightly more children and less adults living in households, and tended to have younger children. Further analyses indicated that among women who had other adults living with them (26%), most of these adults were their parents (47%) and siblings (39%).

The average years of completed education of the women was 12, and 28% of them had postsecondary education. The average year of education of African American women is similar to that of White women, but lower proportions of African American women obtained postsecondary education. Fifty-eight percent

Table 1
continued

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Full sample</i>		<i>White women</i>		<i>African American women</i>	
<i>Categorical Variables</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>N</i>
Race						
White	35	377	Not applicable		Not applicable	
African American	54	576				
Others	11	121				
Marital status						
Never Married	41	447	19	74	54	312
Divorced or Separated	56	617	77	291	44	251
Widowed	3	33	3	12	2	13
Employment Status						
Working now	58	639	66	249	55	318
Laid off /Looking for job	17	190	10	39	22	127
Retired	1	8	0	0	1	7
Keeping house	18	198	18	66	16	93
Student	6	62	6	23	5	31
Educational Status						
Less than High School	36	374	35	127	32	178
High School Graduates	37	386	32	118	42	237
Postsecondary education	28	291	33	121	26	144

of single mothers were employed at the time of interview, the average ratio of the years they had worked full-time and part-time were 39% and 10%, respectively. Compared to White mothers, lower proportions of African American mothers were employed in 1993, and they also had lower full-time employment years.

Table 1 also indicates that White women were economically better off than African American women. Specifically, White women had more labor income, and higher house values, and received less welfare income. White women also received more child support per child. White women and African American women received similar amount of income from the relatives and

the non-relatives. Interestingly, African American women had higher assets income than White women, although both groups of women had very small amounts of assets income.

Further analyses indicated that 73% of the women had labor income, and about 50% received welfare income. Twenty-three percent of the women owned their house, and less than 8% of the sample had asset income. A majority of the women who had houses and assets income were previously married. Only twenty-eight percent of the women received child support. Finally, about 17% of the respondents received financial support from relatives or non-relatives; among them, 54% were African American, and 63% were previously married.

Results from Analysis of Variance

A comparison of mean incomes by the three educational groups is presented in Table 2. The results indicate that the women's average labor income, house values, welfare income, and child support per child varied significantly by educational attainment. For the full sample, the respondents with post-secondary education had significantly higher labor income, house values, child support, and significantly lower welfare income than the respondents with less than a high school degree or with a high school degree. The respondents with a high school degree also had significantly higher labor income, house values, child support and lower welfare income than the respondents with less than a high school degree. The women with higher educational levels were also more likely to be employed at the time of interview and worked more years out of their possible employment years, both part-time and full-time (see Table 2).

White and African American women maintained similar outcomes across the three different educational groups to those found in the full sample (see Table 2). For both White and African American women, there was a significant difference across the three different educational groups in labor income, house values, child support, and welfare income. Thus, post-secondary education plays an important role in boosting both White and African American single mothers' economic well-being and reducing their reliance on welfare income. In terms of the financial support from relatives and non-relatives, for the White women,

Table 2

Analysis of Variance and Chi-Square tests assessing effects of education on different types of income

<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<i>Less than High School</i>	<i>High School Graduates</i>	<i>Post secondary Education</i>	<i>F Values χ^2</i>
Full Sample	n=374	n=386	n=291	
Labor Income (\$)	4,808	10,276	17,821	115.4***
Assets Income (\$)	13	41.8	214.8	1.53
House Value (\$)	6,797	14,672	27,356	21.3***
Welfare Income (\$)	4,189	1,949	1,045	87.7***
Support Income (\$)	163	289	298	.79
Child support per child	235	564	1001	22.7***
Ratio of yr full-time employed	.28	.43	.52	53.95***
Ratio of yr parttime employed	.08	.09	.13	6.89**
% currently employed	39	60	80	111***
White women	n=127	n=118	n=121	
Labor Income (\$)	5,840	12,321	19,349	35.14***
Assets Income (\$)	33.5	104.3	90.8	.73
House Values (\$)	8,391	27,283	46,733	15.75***
Welfare Income (\$)	3,800	1,551	899	30.1***
Support Income (\$)	133	73	423	4.62*
Child Support per child	491	1,096	1,578	10.8**
Ratio of yrs full-time employed	.38	.52	.54	9.89***
Ratio of yrs part-time employed	.07	.09	.14	7.02**
% currently employed	46	70	85	44.0***
African American women	n=178	n=237	n=144	
Labor Income (\$)	4,210	9,404	16,899	66.04***
Assets Income (\$)	.1	16.2	354.7	1.43
House Value (\$)	2,947	9,565	12,611	5.9**
Welfare Income (\$)	4,074	2,148	1,099	41.84***
Support Income (\$)	147	342	129	0.89
Child Support per child	76	351	533	8.5***
Ratio of yrs full-time employed	.22	.39	.51	39.5***
Ratio of yrs part-time employed	.08	.09	.12	2.3
% currently employed	34	56	78	61.3***

* $p < .05$; ** $P < .01$; *** $P < .001$.

those with post-secondary education received significantly more income support from the relatives and non-relatives than those without a college education. For African American women the trend was reversed, with those having a college degree receiving the least from relatives and non-relatives.

Results from regression analyses

To follow up on the results from descriptive analysis and analysis of variance, hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. Before conducting regression analyses, however, regression diagnostics were conducted. We did not include assets income in multiple regression analyses because only 7.6% of the sample had assets income. In addition, this variable was not significantly related with education in bivariate analyses. All other five dependent variables, labor income, house values, welfare income, child support, and support income from relatives and non-relatives, had outliers. The five variables were log transformed but the regression results were very similar to the models without transformation. Therefore, we kept the original models. Each source of income was regressed on the independent variables by race. The results are presented in Tables 3, 4 and 5, for all women, White women and African American women, respectively. Educational status was entered last into the regression to assess the independent effects of women's education after controlling for control variables in the regression.

Full model (with all women included). First, dependent variables were regressed on the control variables. These control variables together explained 53% of the variance in labor income, 12% in house values, 51% in welfare income, 12% in child support, and 2% in income support from relatives and non-relatives.

Next, the independent variable education was added into these models (see Table 3). When the education variable was entered, the R^2 did not change for support income ($R^2=.02$). However, the R^2 increased by 6% (from 53% to 56%) in labor income, 17% (from 12% to 14%) in house values, 2% (from 51% to 52%) in welfare income, and 17% (from 12% to 14%) in child support.

The results indicate that older women had higher house values and received more welfare income. Compared to women who

Table 3

Regression coefficients (unstandardized) for demographic, employment and education related factors affecting labor income, house values, welfare income, child support per child and financial support from relatives and non-relatives: All women

<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>Labor Income</i>	<i>House Values</i>	<i>Welfare Income</i>	<i>Child Support</i>	<i>Support Income</i>
Age (Never married)	37	531*	31.8**	7.5	-7.5
Previously married (divorced, separated or widowed) (White)	371	2,542	-615**	N.A.	276*
African American	-371	-12,282***	-449**	-604***	45.9
Number of adults	292	8,452***	-264*	-111	-24.1
Number of children under 18	-327	2,629*	826***	N.A.	10.1
Age of youngest child	137*	446	-15.9	34.3***	17.9
Employed in 1992	2,877***	-2,633	-1,173***	237*	278*
Ratio of yrs full-time employed	2,127*	5,316	-1,271***	12.5	-83.7
Ratio of yrs part-time employed	-900	8,685	-1,063*	-292	231.6
Working hours in 1992	6.3***	4.7**	-1.13**	-.03	-20**
County unemployment rate (Less than high school)	20.7	-350	135***	-62.4***	1.2
High school graduates	742	8,811**	-603*	237*	162
Post-secondary education	5,496***	16,292***	-733**	605***	88
Model information	F=93.1*** R ² =.56 N=982	F=12.3*** R ² =.14 N=982	F=81.8 R ² =.52 N=982	F=14.1*** R ² =.14 N=982	F=1.45 R ² =.02 N=982

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001. N.A. = not applicable.

were never married, those who were previously married received less welfare income but got more financial support from relatives and non-relatives. White women had higher house values, received more child support and welfare income compared to African American women, after controlling for other variables in the model. Number of children and other adults were both positively related to higher house values. Women with more children received more welfare income, but those with more other adults in households received less welfare income.

Employment status at the time of the interview is a significant predictor of women's economic well-being. Compared with the women who were not employed in 1992, those who were employed had higher labor income, received more child support, more financial support from relatives and non-relatives, and less welfare income. Similarly, those who were working more hours had higher labor income and house values, and also received less welfare income. Women's work history, particularly number of years worked part-time, had weaker impact on women's economic status. Number of years worked full-time is positively related to women's current labor income and negatively related to current welfare income. Past part-time work experience, however, is only negatively related to their welfare income.

The level of education, especially post-secondary education, had significant effects on women's labor income, house values, welfare income, and child support per child, after their demographic characteristics and employment-related variables were controlled. Compared to women without a high school degree, those with a high school degree had higher house values and child support, and less welfare income; and those with post-secondary education had much higher house values and child support, and much lower welfare income. Those with postsecondary education also had significantly higher labor income compared with those without a high school degree. In 1992, women with post-secondary education had \$5,496 more in labor income and \$605 more in child support compared to the ones without a high school degree. Similarly, women with postsecondary education had \$16,292 more in their house values compared to the ones without a high school degree. At the same time, women with

postsecondary education received \$733 less in welfare compared to those without a high school degree.

White women. Similar to the full sample, White women with higher levels of education had significantly more labor income, house values, child support, and less welfare income, after controlling for other variables in the model. Women with higher education also received more support income. Compared to women with less than a high school degree, those with a high school education had homes worth \$18,060 more and those with a college education had homes worth \$30,686 more. At the same time, the women with a high school education received \$653 less in welfare income and those with a college education received \$870 less in welfare income compared to those without a high school degree. White women with a college education had significantly higher labor income (\$5,014) and received more child support (\$818) and support income (\$331) compared to their counterparts without a high school degree.

African American Women. Similar to White women, postsecondary education had significantly positive effects on African American women's labor income, child support and welfare income. Compared with those without a high school degree, those with postsecondary education had more labor income. They also received more child support and less welfare income. For example, compared to those without a high school degree, African American women with postsecondary education had \$5,734 more in labor income and received \$309 more child support per child. Women with postsecondary education also received \$565 less in welfare income compared to those without a high school degree. Those with a high school degree received significantly less welfare income compared to those without a high school degree, but there were no significant differences in terms of their labor income and child support income compared to those without a high school degree.

Discussion

This study examines the economic well-being of single mothers and related factors. The findings shed new lights in understanding factors that contribute to the economic status of

Table 4

Regression coefficients (unstandardized) for demographic, employment and education related factors affecting labor income, house values, welfare income, child support per child and financial support from relatives and non-relatives: White women

<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>Labor Income</i>	<i>House Values</i>	<i>Welfare Income</i>	<i>Child Support</i>	<i>Support Income</i>
Age	128	1,010*	-3.9	11.8	-2.5
(Never married)					
Previously married (divorced, separated or widowed)	-1,596	-6,759	.07	N.A.	278
Number of adults	291	12,795**	-412*	-120	-101
Number of children under 18	-293	7,572*	479**	N.A.	-38
Age of youngest child	150	903	-30	57.1*	-7.03
Employed in 1992	2,639*	624	-2,042***	472	-34.7
Ratio of yrs full-time employed	4,729*	10,535	-1,503**	-66	-372
Ratio of yr part-time employed	2,949	30,563	-1,119	-438	194
Working hours in 1992	6.9***	7.4*	-.10***	-.08	-.06
County unemployment rate	-273	160	173**	-134**	-13.1
(Less than high school)					
High school graduates	367	18,060*	-653*	288	-32.2
Post-secondary education	5,014***	30,686***	-870*	818**	331*
Model information	F=29.2*** R ² =.52 N=341	F=6** R ² =.18 N=341	F=32*** R ² =.54 N=341	F=5.5*** R ² =.14 N=341	F=1.7 R ² =.06 N=341

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. N.A. = not applicable.

Table 5

Regression coefficients (unstandardized) for demographic, employment and education related factors affecting labor income, house values, welfare income, child support per child and financial support from relatives and non-relatives: African American women

<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>Labor Income</i>	<i>House Values</i>	<i>Welfare Income</i>	<i>Child Support</i>	<i>Support Income</i>
Age (Never married)	3.7	249	45**	-4.05	-11.2
Previously married (divorced, separated or widowed)	1,091	5,424*	-890**	N.A.	269
Number of adults	243	2,786	-132	-21.4	122
Number of children under 18	-465	1,227	869***	N.A.	28
Age of youngest child	116	160	-15	30.9***	26
Employed in 1992	3,538***	-1,590	-719**	-28.9	410
Ratio of yr full-time employed	1,026	7,757	-1,073**	292*	-55
Ratio of yr part-time employed	-1,512	1,516	-1,019	-162	210
Working hours in 1992	5.5***	1.2	-1.1***	.03	-30**
County unemployment rate (Less than high school)	288*	-468	96.3*	-2.05	-19.3
High school graduates	994	5,106	-553*	118	291
Post-secondary education	5,734***	6,144	-565*	309**	26
Model information	F=54.8*** R ² = .56 N=526	F=3.51*** R ² = .08 N=526	F=44.6*** R ² = .51 N=526	F=5.6*** R ² = .10 N=526	F=1.3 R ² = .03 N=526

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. N.A. = Not applicable.

single-mother families, and their differential effects on White and African American single mothers.

First, among demographic factors, marital status, number of children and number of other adults in the household, had varying effects on the economic well-being of single mothers across race. Previously married African American single mothers had significantly higher house values and received lower welfare income than those who were never married. This documents that never married African American single mothers fared worse than their previously-married counterparts, which is consistent with previous findings (Nichols & Krysik, 1997; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997). This may indicate that previously-married single mothers received financial resources from their previous marriages.

However, after controlling for other factors, there were no statistically significant differences in the economic status of never married and previously married White mothers. Additional analyses indicate that for both African American and White single mothers, previously married women were older, better educated, and had more years of work experience than never married ones. The differential effect of marital status on the economic well-being by race may be partly due to the sample size. Only 19% of White women in the sample were never married compared to 54% of African American women who were never married. Additional research is needed to examine how marital status affects the economic well-being of White and African American women after controlling for their educational attainment.

Number of children and number of adults in the household also had different effects on the economic well-being of White women and African American women. Number of children positively affected White women's house values, but it had no effect on the house values of African American women. Because a majority of the women who had houses were previously married, it is possible that house values were accumulated through divorce settlements and that African American men may have lower house values (Oliver & Shapiro, 1995). Number of adults in the household has positive effect on house values and negative effect on the welfare income of White women only. Further analysis indicated that a majority of other adults living in the households

of White women were their parents (65%), and for African American women, a majority of these adults included their siblings (46%) and parents (44%). Further studies are needed to examine how different living arrangements of single mothers affect their economic well-being, and if they influence the well being of White and African American women differently.

Second, it is worth mentioning that when effects of other variables were controlled, African American single mothers received less welfare income compared to their White counterparts (see Table 3). This finding is not surprising since the amount of cash assistance varies by states with Alabama paying the lowest amount in AFDC benefits and Alaska paying the highest amount. Ozawa (1991) documents that states that are poorer and have a higher concentration of African Americans provide lower AFDC payments than the states that are wealthier with higher concentration of Whites. Therefore, geographic variations may explain this finding.

Third, current employment status and work hours are significantly related to labor income and welfare income of both White and African-American women. The effect of previous work experience on current economic well-being, however, is weaker across the board. For example, for White women, previous full-time work experience was positively related to their labor income and negatively related to their current welfare income, but it had no significant effect on their house values and child support income. For African-American women, earlier full-time work experience was not related to their labor income. It is possible that many of these women were employed in jobs at the lower rungs of the economic ladder with little opportunity for advancement. Surprisingly, previous years of part-time work experience has no significant effect on the labor income of either White or African American single mothers. This finding challenges the assumption that the work-first approach will eventually improve the economic well-being of low-income single women.

Finally, educational status, especially postsecondary education, is positively related to various economic sources of both White and African American single mothers. Education strongly correlates with single mothers' labor income, child support income and welfare income. Postsecondary education has a very

strong effect on African American women's labor income. The average African American women with postsecondary education received \$5,734 more in annual labor income compared to those without a high school degree (for White women, the difference was \$5,014) (see Tables 4 & 5). Postsecondary educational attainment has an effect on White women's house values but this relationship is not significant for African American women. This is possibly because the house values were relatively low across three different educational groups for African American women. Further research is needed to understand how education influences house values and other assets of African American single mothers. The impact of postsecondary education on White women's support income is statistically significant. Better-educated White women received more from their relatives and friends. This relationship, however, is not significant for African American women. Again, further studies examining financial support exchange patterns among White and African American single women will help elaborate on this issue.

In conclusion, never-married African American mothers, single mothers with young children, and those who were not working and had lower education levels are the most economically disadvantaged among all single mothers. The results of this study signify that the effect of postsecondary education in improving economic well-being of both White and African American single mothers is substantial. In comparison, the impact of women work history is weaker. The labor force attachment model emphasizing job search and immediate work participation became popular in the 1980s and 1990s (Freedman, Friedlander, & Riccio, 1993; Mead, 1986, 1998). It was seen as preferable over the human capital development model. The human capital development model, which encourages low-income women to participate in educational and training programs, was considered expensive and ineffective, whereas "the work-oriented model is generally preferable on grounds of both impact and cost" (Mead, 1998, p. 299). Welfare caseloads did in fact decline dramatically after the passage of PROWRA with its emphasis on work-first. However, studies examining the economic well being of welfare leavers indicate that the rate of poverty among low-income women with children continues to remain high and many are only one paycheck away

from losing their job and returning to welfare. Interestingly, of the women who have exited welfare, those with higher education are likely to earn significantly higher levels of income and are less likely to return to welfare. Our study further reinforces the need to invest in the education of women, particularly single women with children in order to help them improve their economic status.

Implications

The significant impact of single mothers' postsecondary education on their economic well-being has important implications for social welfare policy. The 1996 welfare policy changes have limited education and training options for poor women with children. The PRWORA allows women only up to 12 months of vocational training while on welfare. The strict work requirements and time limit are detrimental to welfare recipients who are attending college (Pandey, Zhan, Neely-Barnes, & Menon, 2000). As a result, since the passage of PRWORA in 1996, community colleges, universities and adult education programs have seen dramatic declines in enrollment among welfare recipients (Mathur, 1998; Schmidt, 1998). This legislation places the emphasis on immediate jobs for poor women but falls short of acknowledging the importance of investing in the education of poor women with children. The studies that evaluate welfare-to-work programs indicated these poor single mothers with low educational status are more likely to get low-wage jobs with few benefits, and these jobs do not necessarily benefit their family and children in the long-run (e.g., Bloom & Michalopoulos, 2001; Cancian, 2001; Carnevale & Desrochers, 1999). Our study also concludes that past part-time work experience has no significant effect on women's economic well-being and past full-time work experience has no significant effect on African American women's current labor income.

In general, college attendance among women has increased over the last three decades probably in response to their increasing need for financial independence. Today, women are more likely than men to complete college among Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics (Coley, 2001). A college degree is critical to exit poverty, especially for single women with children. Historically, many women have attended college while on welfare (Schmidt,

1998). We can substantially enhance their opportunities for post-secondary education with a minor change in the 1996 welfare legislation by treating participation in education as a form of employment. Another option would be to lift the 60 month lifetime limit while these women are attending college. In this way, the current federal and state benefits (including cash assistance, childcare and transportation) would continue while they are participating in education and training. Some states are already moving toward this goal (Pandey, Zhan, Neely-Barnes & Menon, 2000). For example, the state of Maine utilizes its maintenance of effort (MOE) dollars to support a "Parents as Scholars Program" that allows women on welfare to attend college and receive cash assistance and support services (Deprez & Butler, 2001). Allowing states to utilize federal dollars to support postsecondary education of women in their states will not require additional federal monies and will give more flexibility to the states to support real progress toward poverty reduction.

Note

1. These two variables were calculated in the following way: (actual years a woman part-time or full-time employed) / (possible years a woman could work). Possible years a woman could work equal her age minus 18. For example, if a 45-year old woman had worked full-time for 15 years, the average ratio she had worked full time is $15/(45-18)=.56$. Hence, the possible range for these two variables is from 0 to 1, with 0 meaning a woman never worked after the age 18, and 1 indicating she worked every year after the age 18.

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What Mothers Want: Welfare Reform and Maternal Desire*

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In this study I use participant observations, face-to-face interviews, and focus group interviews to examine how women on welfare read and negotiate culture-of-poverty discourse and the imagery that this discourse spawns. I spoke with two groups of young single mothers receiving welfare. The first group included young mothers between the ages of 18 and 23 who were attending high school in a community-based program that served women on welfare. The second group included mothers in their early to mid 20's who were attending either a local two-year college or research university. Education was a path of resistance for the women in this study. Young single mothers were motivated to obtain an education; they wanted a better life for their child. As students, women were situated in a status that allowed them to reject the attributes associated with dominant welfare imagery. Women forged identities against the grain of dominant images that depict all women on welfare as "lazy women" and "bad mothers." The students in this study made a claim to characteristics like hard work, motivation, and good parenting. Yet, students did not fully reject culture-of-poverty discourse. Their identities as students were situated in a form of oppositional thinking that set them against other women on welfare.

Key words: *welfare, single mothers, education, women, identity*

Introduction

In the mid 1960s scholars and politicians spun Oscar Lewis' culture-of-poverty thesis into a dominant explanation of wel-

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fare "dependency." As a discourse that ebbs and flows with the social and political climate, the conservative atmosphere of the 1990s reignited culture-of-poverty thinking and gave shape to the welfare reform debate (Sidel, 2000). The language of reform construes welfare "dependency" as an issue of out-of-wedlock birth, which, in turn, is seen as a feature of "underclass" culture. Dominant imagery depicts single mothers on welfare as women who lack an "appropriate" orientation to the Protestant work ethic and to mainstream family values (Hill Collins, 2000; Kaplan, 1997; Sidel, 2000). Consequently, reform discourse emphasizes re-socialization; it encourages the formation of programs that aim to inculcate an "appropriate" (read White, middle class, heterosexual) orientation to work and family.

Progressive thinkers counter mainstream arguments by refocusing attention on the structural causes of single parenting and welfare "dependency" (Ambramovitz, 1996; Edin and Lein, 1997; Eitzen and Baca Zinn, 2000; Parvez, 2002; Kaplan, 1997; Seccombe, 1999; Sidel, 2000; Wilson, 1997). (Particular attention is paid to Black women since welfare discourse is a racialized discourse.) Scholars suggest that culture-of-poverty discourse is a political strategy—a discursive move—that obscures the effects of recent economic and political trends on low-income individuals and families. Economic restructuring, the shift of fiscal responsibility from the federal to the state and local level (the new federalism), and deep cuts to the social safety net has deeply impacted working class and poor communities (Edin and Lein, 1997; Eitzen and Baca Zinn, 2000; Kaplan, 1997; Sidel, 2000; Wilson 1996).

Research findings show that low-income Black women value marriage as much as White women (Bulcroft and Bulcroft, 1993; McLaughlin and Lichter, 1997; Kaplan, 1997; Wilson, 1996). However, a shrinking pool of economically stable men makes marriage less likely, and the strain of living in poverty contributes to divorce and marital disruption among those who are married (Blau, Kahn, and Waldfogel, 2000; Eitzen and Baca Zinn, 2000, p. 62). In sum, studies find that the outcome of economic and political changes—expressed in peoples lives as poor educational and occupational opportunities, poverty wage jobs, anti-affirmative action policies, and continuing employment discrimination—are the strongest determinants of welfare "dependency" (Eitzen and Baca Zinn, 2000; Kaplan, 1997; Wilson, 1997).

Elaine Bell Kaplan's (1997) recent study of Black teenage mothers extends class and/or race-based approaches to welfare "dependency." Kaplan demonstrates that teenage pregnancy cannot be reduced to a single system (class, race, or gender) by highlighting the complex ways that gender intersects with race and class (an intersectional approach). Like Wilson (1997), Kaplan begins with the class-based premise that industrial restructuring and an eroding social safety net has weakened family and community ties in poor inner-city neighborhoods. However, Kaplan furthers this argument by exploring the effect of economic restructuring on mother/daughter relationships and on teenagers' perceptions of their future opportunities. Economic restructuring impacts low-income women in unique ways. All women are unduly burdened with reproductive work (e.g., childrearing, housework, and care-giving), but low-income mothers care for children under conditions of tremendous strain. In the past, single mothers could rely on extended family members and on "other mothers" and "community mothers" (see Hill Collins, 2000; Kaplan, 1997). Now mothers parent teenage daughters in social isolation as economic restructuring and cuts to the social safety net leave inner-city communities and poor extended families with little to offer in the way of support.

Kaplan (1997) generates what she calls a "poverty of relationships" theory to help illuminate the link between macro economic forces, systemic forms of oppression, and micro-level interpersonal relationships that impact the psychosocial development of young single mothers. The erosion of family support works to isolate Black teenagers from social institutions, and the consequences of social isolation are expressed in uniquely gendered ways. Kaplan (1997, p. 11) notes that the teenage mothers in her study "describe being disconnected from primary family relations, abandoned by their schools and by the men in their lives, and isolated from relations with other teenagers. . . ." Under these conditions, a baby comes to symbolize love and social connection (Kaplan, 1997, p. 181). Despite feminist gains, patriarchy still teaches all girls that their value as women is in their sexual attraction to men and in their role as mothers (Kaplan, 1997; Tolman, 1994). This message has resurfaced in new and powerful ways in the conservative climate of the 1980s and 90s. For poor women, the "motherhood" mandate interacts with increasing social isolation

of poor Black neighborhoods, the absence of good educational opportunities for all poor individuals, and the absence of living wage jobs.

In contrast to the popular view that the African Americans condone out-of-wedlock birth, Kaplan (1997) asserts that Black families strongly discourage this behavior. A history of racial oppression, as that oppression is uniquely shaped by gender, had a powerful influence on women's reactions to their daughter's pregnancy. The adult mothers in Kaplan's (1997, p. 68) study were "deeply disappointed with their daughters." Mothers saw adherence to mainstream education, marriage, and childbearing norms as crucial to their daughter's success. Moreover, mobility was a family affair. Kaplan (1997, p. 69) found that low-income mothers looked to their daughters as a source of family mobility—if their daughters rose then they too would be viewed as successful. Middle class mothers looked to their daughters to sustain the family's hard-won place in the class system. As Kaplan (1997, p. 89) explains, "For poor mothers . . . or working class mothers, poverty is ongoing; for middle class mothers . . . memories of childhood poverty and the fear that poverty might be just over the horizon if they lose their jobs . . . drive them to censure their daughters." Pregnancy destroyed the hopes of lower, working, and middle class mothers of pregnant, teenage daughters.

The symbolic effects of teenage pregnancy are as devastating as the economic threat. The good girl/bad girl dichotomy still signifies, albeit in new ways, female respectability. As Hill Collins (2000) argues, Black women's sexuality continues to be forged through controlling images of Black womanhood. The image of the Jezebel (a sexually assertive image) and the "hoochie girl" (a contemporary take on the Jezebel) define Black women's sexuality as a deviation from a White, middle class, norm. The image of the matriarch and the welfare queen continue to define Black women as deviant mothers (Hill Collins, 2000; Sidel, 2000). In a culture that blames mothers for their children's failures and construes Black women through wholly negative imagery, pregnant teenagers are marked as "soiled goods" and adult mothers of pregnant teenagers are marked as "bad mothers" (Kaplan, 1997, p. 81).

To summarize, class and/or race-based approaches to single parenting and welfare "dependency" critique dominant culture-

of-poverty discourse by revealing the ways in which macro level changes impact low-income individuals and families. Kaplan extends this approach by accounting for the interconnected effect of gender, race, and class. Her analysis reveals the nuanced ways in which multiple systems of oppression shape the choices and actions of Black teenage mothers. Moreover, Kaplan's work points to the importance of micro-level responses to macro-level conditions. Our ability to grasp the ways in which mothers on welfare negotiate their everyday lives in the context of dominant welfare imagery is key to our ability to enact progressive social change.

Goal of This Study

I am interested in the ways in which young single mothers negotiate welfare reform discourse and the dominant imagery invoked by this discourse. I take up Kaplan's (1997) discussion of the relationship between out-of-wedlock births, social stigma, and social mobility, and I extend this discussion in one key way. Where Kaplan explores adult mothers' experiences of social stigma and fears of downward mobility, I explore the impact of welfare imagery on young single mothers who are striving to "better" themselves through education. I ask three key questions:

1. How do young single mothers interpret and explain their pregnancy?
2. How do young single mothers read and negotiate welfare reform discourse and imagery?
3. What do young single mothers think about welfare reform and its' potential impact on their ability to achieve a "better" life?

When I began this study I was focused only on women's experiences of welfare reform. Thus, my ability to analyze racial differences is limited.

Participants and Data Collection Techniques

The data for this study came primarily from a research project that I conducted on young single mothers who attended high school at an alternative educational program called the Family Center (Group One). I supplemented my primary data with an in-depth focus group interview of young single mothers who

were attending college and living in a quasi-communal setting called the Cooperative Living Center (Group Two). This focus group was conducted for a Faculty Senate report that I compiled on the affects of welfare reform on college students who were receiving aid.

I focused on single mothers in school for two reasons. My first reason was one of convenience; the director of the Family Center granted me permission to collect data in this setting. Women on welfare are a hard-to-study group. My connection to the center gave me the chance to meet a large number of young single mothers on welfare. My second reason for studying single mothers in school was to challenge dominant images of women on welfare and give voice to an understudied segment of the welfare population. As research (e.g., Edin & Lein, 1997) has shown, most women on welfare do work, or have worked at some point in their lives. Moreover, studies suggest that many women on welfare have a desire to improve their economic position through education and skill training. Yet, public, political, and, at times, academic discourse treats women on welfare as a monolithic group (Hill Collins, 2000; Sidel, 2000) and construes the characteristics of "hard-to-serve" women (a small percentage of women on welfare) as characteristics that are common to the majority of women on welfare. As one of the participants in this study stated,

They never tell about the good part, about the people who go to school. You always hear, 'teenage mothers, what are we gonna do about this?' They'll never say anything good about parents who are going to school. Only thing you ever hear is negative.

It is a relevant time to study single mothers in school given the impact that time limits (a chief feature of welfare reform policy) may have on the educational and occupational goals of women receiving welfare.

Data on both groups was collected in a city located in a border state (north/south border). While not affiliated, the Family Center and the Community Living Center were located in close physical proximity. All of the participants lived in the city where the study took place. The population of this city was a little over a quarter of a million at the time of this study. My methods consisted of

participant observations, face-to-face interviews, and focus group interviews.¹

Group One

Group One included students who were attending the Family Center in the late 1990s. The Family Center is a community-based educational program (funded through a mix of state funds, grants, and private donations) that serves young women on welfare. The program offers education and skill training, health care for mothers and children at an on-site health clinic, and on-site childcare. The center opened in 1989 and can enroll up to 80 high school students and can serve 200 children in the day care facility. Although enrollment varies from year-to-year, the number of students tends to hover between 65 and 80. The stated goal of the Family Center was to provide students with a high school education and to prepare them for additional training and/or college, which instructors saw as necessary to students' ability to earn a living wage. Students were offered two different educational paths; they could earn a high school diploma or take classes that prepared them for the GED exam. In addition to academic instruction, students were required to attend life skills, job skills, and parenting classes. Job skill classes focus on resume writing, interviews, "appropriate" dress, and "appropriate" conduct.

I observed in this setting for a little over a year, and I observed students in two different contexts. I began by observing in various classroom settings (e.g., parenting courses, skills training courses, educational classes). I informed students of my identity and I asked their permission to sit in on the class at least once a week. Anywhere from ten to fifteen students were in attendance at each class, and classes lasted for about two hours. Students ranged in age from 15 to 23. All of the students received welfare, and most were from low-income families. About one-third of the students in this setting were White and two thirds were African American. Most students had one child, but three of the women with whom I spoke had two or more children.

In addition to classroom observations, I volunteered as a literacy tutor on a weekly basis for about four months. Each session lasted for approximately two hours. There was usually one student in attendance at each session but, on occasion, two or three students would attend the same session. I tutored ap-

proximately 10 different students over the course of my work as a literacy volunteer. About three students attended sessions on a regular basis, whereas other students would come and go as their schedule permitted. As with the students in the classroom setting, students who attended literacy training were informed of my research agenda and my academic affiliation.

I supplemented my participant observations with in-depth interviews of 10 students, seven instructors, and the program Director. Six of the mothers who agreed to be interviewed were Black, and four were White. Two instructors were Black, and five were White. The program Director was White. For the purpose of this paper, I focus primarily on interviews with students. I touch on student/instructor interactions when it is necessary to highlight how those interactions shaped students' experiences. The number of students that I interviewed was restricted by Internal Review Board criteria. I was granted permission to interview students who were 18 years of age or older. Thus, all of the students quoted in this study (quotes from interviews, observations, and the focus group described below) were between the ages of 18 and 23.

I started each interview with open-ended questions designed to draw out the student's experience of mothering, school, and welfare. For instance, I asked, "Did the baby change your life?" These types of questions often would elicit a narrative of the student's life experiences. General questions were followed up with more specific questions. The interviews took place in a quiet room (e.g., the library when it was not in use, or the lounge when it was free) located at the center. Interviews were from one to two hours in length. I gave instructors a small gift (note cards) as a token of appreciation. I paid students \$10.00 for their time. Many of the students in this setting worked at paid jobs while attending school and caring for their children. I felt that it was important to compensate them for their time. Several students refused to grant me an interview despite the monetary compensation, and many of those who agreed to an interview stated that they were motivated by the chance to tell their story.

Finally, I conducted an in-depth focus group at the Family Center. The program Director incorporated the focus group into a life skills course. Twelve students, two instructors, and the

Director participated in the focus group. I avoided questions that focused on students' experiences at the center because the Director and several instructors were present at the focus group session. Instead, I asked questions about (a) students' experiences with single parenting; (b) their reading of, and responses to, dominant images of "welfare mothers"; and (c) their perceptions of welfare and welfare reform. The instructors' presence did not seem to deter students from speaking openly and honestly about their lives.

Group Two

I conducted an in-depth focus group with single mothers on welfare who were attending the local community college or university. Eleven women participated in the focus group. Five of the women were enrolled in the university, and seven were enrolled in the community college. Although the health care professions (e.g., nursing, physician assistant, and respiratory therapy) dominated as majors of choice, one woman was majoring in math, one in anthropology, and one in pre-law. Four of the participants were White, six were African American, and one was Native American. Women ranged in age from early-to-mid twenties. The participants lived at the Cooperative Living Center. The program was run as a quasi cooperative. Apartments were clustered together over a two-block radius. A child-care center and a community meeting room were located at the heart of the complex. Although students lived in their own apartment (paid for with a housing subsidy), they were required to attend community meetings, group support sessions, and many participated in cooperative childcare responsibilities. In addition to qualifying for government aid, students had to be enrolled full time at a two- or four-year college or university, and they were required to maintain of a 2.0 GPA (most of the women in the focus group maintained GPA of 3.0 or higher).

Findings

Family Reactions

Like the women in Kaplan's (1997) study, the women in this study reported that their mothers and other family members

were deeply disappointed when they "turned up pregnant." This finding held for both Black and White students. Reactions of family members (particularly mothers) reflected economic and social-psychological concerns. Low-income mothers dreaded the added financial burden of a grandchild, and they felt stigmatized by their daughter's out-of-wedlock birth. Several of the women indicated that family members pointed to them as examples of bad behavior. Samantha's mother went so far as to call her a "ho," but Chantal's experience was more typical of the young women in this study. Chantal's mother warned Chantal's sister against the dangers of single motherhood by pointing to Chantal as an example of "failed womanhood." As Chantal recounted,

She [Chantal's mother] told my sister, 'just keep on doing good girl,' and all of that. 'Look at your sister. Don't be like her and have kids. Here she is now, she's got two kids.'

Why did the young mothers in this study choose to give birth and to keep their child given the strong family and community sanctions against out-of-wedlock birth?

The Motivation for Entering Family Life Through Birth

Some studies concentrate on the economic gains that accrue to low-income women who enter family life through marriage rather than birth (Allan Guttmacher Institute, 1999; Garis, 1998; Remez, 1998). For instance, a report by the Allan Guttmacher Institute (1999) claims that, women who have children and never marry are 10 times more likely to be on welfare. Scholars who challenge these findings argue that marriage does not always lift women out of poverty. Instead, poverty is viewed as shaping marriage choices and opportunities (Blau, Kahn and Waldfogel, 2000; Edin and Lein, 1997; Kaplan, 1997; Wilson, 1996). The women in this study echoed this understanding. They did not view marriage as a path to a better life. The complex interplay of poverty, race, and gender shaped their views of future possibilities.

Like the teenagers in Kaplan's (1997) study, the women in this study reported that they felt adrift prior to their pregnancy. They were beset by family problems and had difficulties in school. This held for both Black and White teenage mothers. Some were doing poorly in course work, and others had difficulty getting along

with their peers. Both Black and White participants in this study lacked a positive student identity. For instance, Tracy, a Black student, "lost interest in school." She "just didn't know what [she] was getting into." When I asked what their future might hold if they waited to have children, the majority of mothers in this study indicated that they would be worse off than they are now. Kathleen, a White student, revealed: "I had green hair in high school. I was doing nothing. I would have ended up on drugs or in some kind of trouble." Holly affirms Kathleen's response when she claims that she would "probably have just quit school and got [herself] a job." Young mothers simply had no vision of themselves as participating in socially valued roles in the future. Like Kaplan (1997), I found that the mother role was perceived as a viable path to a social bond (the baby as a source of love) and involvement in social life.

Many of the young mothers in Kaplan's (1997) study dropped out of school or were struggling to complete school. However, most of the women in this study stated that having a child sparked their desire to finish school, and many hoped to attain additional training or attend college. Although educational attainment may not be a widespread response to single parenting, it is one possible response as evidenced by the women in this study. As such, we need to understand how women arrive at this decision.

Both high school and college students were well aware of dominant constructions of "welfare mothers." Jeanette, a high school student, reflected a common understanding among students when she stated, "A lot of people think people on welfare are just lazy and won't work." Participants also struggled against constructions of welfare mothers as "bad" mothers. Mary, a high school student, echoed this theme: "They think a woman can't take care of her child. People think if you're single then your child is going to grow up to be a juvenile delinquent." Welfare imagery permeated students' lives; images circulated at home (they shaped family reactions to the pregnancy), at school (they shaped student/instructor interactions), and in the media.

Dominant constructions of poor single mothers as "failed mothers" may have the unintended consequence of motivating some women to seek out educational opportunities. For the women in this study, education was a way to transcend control-

ling images of welfare mothers. The child ignited their desire to strive for a "better" future. Moreover, for students who reported that they struggled in public high school, having a child helped strengthen their resolve to work through personal barriers to educational attainment. Candice highlighted this finding when she described her hopes for her children's future:

I figure that if I go to school, my children, when they grow up, they'll look at my life and say well, 'Mom went to school, we can finish school.' I want them to . . . know right from wrong so they won't get out there and make the same mistakes that I made.

Anna's comments also captured the idea that the child represented both a source of love and signified future possibilities:

I was out running the streets and everything, looking for love that I never got at home so then I got pregnant. All that had to change. I kind of stopped everything cause now I have a son and I got to watch what I do.

For the women in this study, education represented both economic stability and social respect.

In line with research findings on welfare and social mobility (Edin and Lein, 1997; Kaplan, 1997), both Black and White students in my study embraced a fairly mainstream vision of the "American Dream." When I asked women what they wanted for their future, both high school and college students invoked a middle class image of economic mobility. They wanted education beyond high school, a good job, home ownership, the capacity to support their family without financial worry, and, most of all, they wanted their children to attend college. Kate, a White college student, affirmed this finding when she stated,

I'm the first grandchild in my family to finish high school. To graduate high school! Hey, I've got to go to college. I'm not trying to say that I'm better than anyone else in my family, but I want to have this under my belt. My mother finished high school and worked at the same job for 25 years. My mother likes her job, but I would rather have, it took her a long time to get the money she's making now. I can get it [a higher wage] as soon as I get out of college.

Both high school and college students in this study made explicit connections between education, living wage jobs, and social

mobility. Kate underscored this connection: "Education is more important to me [than working in a minimum wage job] because I can't function as a household off of \$6.00 an hour opposed to when I graduate and I can make \$15.00 an hour." Many of the high school students wanted to enter into medical professions like nursing because they saw these jobs as good paying jobs.

Education was also viewed as a way to garner social respect. Education afforded students the opportunity to forge an "appropriate" mothering identity. Several of the women in this study indicated that education was a way to protect their children from the stigma of being born to a "welfare mother." As Sandra, a White student, stated, "I want to have something to show my kids that says, 'Hey, your mother did something besides sitting on her butt. She did something!'" The desire to protect children from social stigma was underscored in a story that Mary, a Black student, told:

There was an incident with my [Mary] boyfriend's mother. She went to school because her son was in trouble. The principal asked her if she had a four-year degree. He said the majority of people who don't have four-year degrees, have problems with their children.

Mary was stunned by the principal's remarks: "I was like, Oh! That would hit me hard!" Sandra and Mary's comments point to a fear that was expressed by several of the women in this study. Mothers feared that their children might come to view them through dominant images of women on welfare. Not only did a student status protect their children from the stigma of being a "welfare baby," this status also helped mothers secure their children's respect.

It is difficult to untangle the extent to which the desire for an education emerged independently of students' interactions with the adults in their lives (e.g., parents, caseworkers, and instructors at the Family Center). In all likelihood, it was a little of both. However, many of the students that I spoke with insisted that they came to this decision on their own; that having a child was the spark that set them on a path of social mobility. This was particularly true for college students who reported having little interaction with or encouragement from instructors in their public high schools (Most of the college students who participated in the

focus group earned their GED or high school diploma at a public high school or adult school. They did not attend high school at the Family Center, which was experienced as a supportive setting by the high school students who participated in this study.) Once high school students arrived at the Family Center and college students arrived at the Cooperative Living Center, their desire for an education was elaborated upon, reinforced, and supported through their interactions with peer, staff, and/or instructors.

In all likelihood a high school education will not pull students out of poverty. Moreover, some of the students at the Family Center had to work hard to stay interested in school. Instructors often worried about the quality of students' work, and they were concerned that some students would drop out of the program. Some college students left the Cooperative Living Center because they did not meet the GPA criteria set by the staff at the center. In short, for some students there was a gap between dreaming of a better future and achieving that dream. While students may struggle with both personal and structural barriers to achievement, the dream itself is important to understand. Dreaming expresses a vision of oneself as future self, and it is a step toward believing in one's own potential.

With the support of instructors, many of the high school students did complete their program, and a few moved on to community college or a training program. Furthermore, instructors at both the Family Center and staff at the Community Living Center acted against the grain of welfare reform policies that promote marriage when they encouraged students to complete their education and become financially independent before they married or became romantically involved. This strategy took hold of many students. When asked about future goals in interviews and focus group sessions, most students placed educational and career goals above marriage.

Welfare Reform: A Threat to Mobility

Women viewed welfare reform as a threat to their mobility. In line with recent research (see Parvez, 2002), students understood that, despite the rhetoric, welfare reform does not promote economic independence for poor women. Women viewed time limits

and work requirements as hampering their capacity to achieve an “appropriate” maternal identity and to secure an “appropriate” future for their children. (Students were required to work 20 hours per week after a period of 12 months. This was extended to 24 months after I finished collecting my data.) High school students were anxious about their ability to attain further education, and college students worried that welfare reform would push them out of college and into poverty wage work. As Tonya, a college student, stated,

They [reformers] need to understand that going to school is like a full time job and not making the [work] requirement of 20 hours a week . . . If I’m working 20 hours a week at Dairy Mart how is that improving me?

Getting good grades and spending quality time with their children was important to students. This was particularly true for college students. High school students were being socialized to adopt “appropriate” mothering norms. Instructors construed mother/child interactions as a central feature of “appropriate” mothering, and this norm was reinforced in parenting classes offered at the center. Attending school, earning good grades, and spending time with children were behaviors that distanced students from negative images of women on welfare and solidified their identities as “good” mothers. The threat that welfare reform posed to maternal identity is conveyed in Jane’s struggle to balance motherhood and student life:

I have all night classes. I go to class from five to eight. I send my child to day care and I leave him there until four o’clock. Then I get him and I have an hour left until class. I have to go to class from five to eight so that doesn’t leave me any time this semester to spend with him. My mom brings him home after I get out of class. Then it’s time to get a snack, go to bed, read a story, maybe go over his homework. They [reformers] seem to think that we have all this time on our hands. I don’t have time!

By impinging on the time that they spend with their children and by undermining their ability to obtain education beyond high school, welfare reform threatened to shrink the distance that the

women in this study placed between themselves and dominant images of welfare mothers.

Resistance and Culture-of-poverty Discourse

The students in this study responded to welfare imagery in complex and, at times, paradoxical ways. Students did not fully reject culture-of-poverty discourse nor did they extend their critical deconstructions of "welfare mothers" to all women on welfare. Like the participants in Kaplan's (1997) and Seccombe's (1999) study, the women in this study engaged in a form of social distancing that set them apart from other women on welfare. A student status allowed women to lay claim to the positive side of the idler/worker, good mother/bad mother dichotomy. But, this strategy kept the dichotomy in place. Jennifer exemplified this trend. Jennifer, a college student, set her emerging identity as a "good" student against "other" women on welfare:

We are the minority. You can go to housing projects, there are girls up there that are going to school but there are some that are just sitting there and I'm thinking, 'There's nothing wrong with you that you can't work or go to school, you need to make a choice.' The ones that sit there and don't do anything make me look bad because I'm trying to make something of myself.

One student suggested that welfare reform might actually, "stop them from having baby, after baby, after baby." Of course students could point to women who fit the stereotypical image of women on welfare. However, students engaged in a form of statistical discrimination wherein knowing one "lazy welfare mother" was generalized as a statement about most women on welfare. As students, they saw themselves as an exception to this rule. Although the women in this study could analyze how structural barriers impacted their own choices and behaviors, they had difficulty extending this analysis to other women on welfare. Instructors at the Family Center fed this tendency. For instance, instructors often told students that they were exceptional because, unlike other women on welfare, they were "doing something with their lives." Yet, college students came to this belief without the reinforcement of staff at the Community Living Center. In fact, the Director of the

center challenged several college students when they expressed negative views of women on welfare at the focus group session. For the women in this study, the presence of "other" women on welfare served to remind them that in the face of dominant welfare imagery their claim to respectability was a fragile one.

Conclusion

Resistance is limited by our capacity to envision possibilities outside of dominant discourse. Responses to domination are shaped within the contours of oppositional dichotomies that work to reinscribe the very thing we seek to eradicate (Hill Collins, 2000). As with most forms of resistance to domination, this epistemological dilemma was evident in the actions of students in this study. We can understand students' resistance as both radical and limited. Students worked hard to overcome internalized oppression—to escape the cruel imagery that pervaded their everyday experiences as single, never-married mothers. They resisted gender norms that drive welfare reform and insisted on economic independence before marriage. And, they saw through the "family values" rhetoric of welfare reform. Yet, their actions drew on, and reinscribed, the very images that they hoped to escape.

Note

1. I have changed the names of people and places in order to protect the women who participated in this study.

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Supportive Communities, an Optimum Arrangement for the Older Population?

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The preference of older people to stay in their own natural environment requires a reassessment of the approach in dealing with this population group. This exploratory study examines a program conducted in Israel called the "Supportive Community", that provides an emergency call service and other essential services at the homes of older people. A case study was performed in two such supportive communities. Interviews conducted with those who operate the programs and with its members seem to indicate that supportive communities provide a satisfactory solution to the needs of older people who continue to live in their natural environment. Many aspects have been addressed that may be considered in planning the physical environment of supportive communities.

Key words: *aging, aging neighborhoods, supportive community*

Introduction

A dramatic increase in life expectancy of people in Western society during the last decades (Brodesky et al., 2000) and the resulting age induced functional disabilities, coupled with a diminishing support of older people by their family, require that more attention be paid to the special needs of older people and their physical environment (Carp, 1994; Ward et al., 1988). Many modern senior-citizen homes and nursing homes have been built. Also, assisted living homes have been built, which appeal especially to middle class and upper middle class people who can afford to live there (Kunkel & Applebaum, 1992). To move to one of these institutions however, means leaving the living

environment to which the older person had become very much attached. If they stay in their homes, this may lead to physical aging and deterioration of the neighborhood. Physical aging of the neighborhood will affect both the quality of life of these older people as well as the urban fabric (Billig & Katz, 2003).

Recently, more and more older persons are being cared for at home, employing domestic aid. Such arrangements have become widely used because of the high cost of alternative arrangements, and because older people generally prefer to stay in their natural environment (Tinker, 1997; Laczako & Victor, 1991). A program called the "Supportive Community" has been operating during the past two decades in 88 places in Israel, and is one of recent initiatives in the search of ways of caring for the elderly by the community.

This study will deal both with the well being of the older person and with the prevention of urban deterioration. The study will examine desirable services the supportive community could provide. It will try to evaluate the adequacy of its physical environment for the aging population, and possible interactions between human aging and aging of the physical environment, based on an exploratory study conducted in two supportive communities in Israel.

Human Aging

The rapid increase of the older population is a relatively new phenomenon that began to occur during the second half of the 20th century, particularly in Western society. It was caused mainly by two recent developments: A dramatic reduction in birth rate, and developments in medical science that have significantly increased life expectancy. Men aged 65+ and women aged 60+ are commonly classified as older people. Their percentage in the population has been increasing continuously in recent years, particularly in Western countries. For instance, in Italy and Sweden people of 65+ account for 17% of the population, in the U.S.A. nearly 13%, and in Israel nearly 10% (Brodesky, Schnur & Beer, 2000).

Old age, and particularly older old age (75 and above), is generally characterized by an irreversible reduction in sensorial functioning, slower response of the neurological system and im-

pairment of the memory (Hultsch & Dixon, 1990). Physical ability is impaired and appearance degraded (Tabbarah et al., 2000) and the occurrence of incurable chronic diseases increases (Peek & Cowerd, 2000).

Hoglund (1985) emphasizes the importance to the community of the older person being independent, even if his functioning is somewhat impaired and he may need some help. Carp (1980) states that to be independent, the person must have easy access to various activities. For instance, older people of low income were deprived of medical care, because of their difficulty in using public transportation to get to the clinic (Rittner & Kirk, 1995).

Aging of the Environment

The living environment is also subject to aging. Investigators who studied the development of the city and its neighborhoods have described a cyclic pattern of processes of urban development and decay. Causes for neighborhood deterioration may be physical, social, economic, municipal or legislative (Gale, 1990; Millard-Ball, 2002). Each of these could be a cause of decay, and could affect other causes as well.

Buildings of poor quality, inadequate maintenance and environmental problems may encourage negative migration from the neighborhood, while causing those who stay to become indifferent about care of their homes. When this happens, the more capable will leave while the economically weak will stay, lacking the means and ability to move elsewhere. The population remaining in the neighborhood will therefore mainly consist of the older and the poor. This will lead to neglect and deterioration of buildings. Local authorities or private investors motivated by short-term considerations will not invest in the maintenance or renewal of old neighborhoods to prevent further deterioration (Eres & Carmon, 1996).

"Aging enclaves" have been observed within cities in Israel and elsewhere. Elderly people tend to be concentrated in those enclaves, whereas the age distribution of the population in other areas of the city remains "young". The uneven distribution of the older population throughout the city is apparently due to internal migration, caused by a difference in attractiveness of certain

areas to residents of different age groups (Pertz, 1984). During the 1920's, the Chicago school had already recognized that the neighborhood affects the behavior of individuals. For instance, Park & Burgess (1929) and Faris & Durham (1939) claimed that living in neglected urban areas causes anonymity and excessive loneliness among residents. Social geriatricians and psychologists have pursued this ecologist's tradition, linking the physical characteristics of the immediate environment with other factors such as social interaction and support. For instance, Carp (1976, 1994), Kasl & Rosenfield (1980) and Lawton, Nehamov & Yeh (1980) have claimed that a better quality neighborhood would bring about increased social interaction. Schorr (1970) has proposed that home is an extension of the individual. If their residence is miserable, residents will become passive, pessimistic and cynical.

The Older Person and his Neighborhood

Data on the boundaries of the older person's living environment may be obtained from studies of a person's "living space", and his ability and habits of using this space during the course of his life. This space is rather limited during childhood and old age. For older people, the relevant immediate environment is their neighborhood (Gonen, 1979).

Older people's satisfaction with the neighborhood depends on its esthetic quality of design, the personal security it provides, its attractiveness and its quietness (Jirovec et al., 1985). Ward et al., (1988), emphasized that the neighborhood is a context of great significance with regard to aging, and is of significance to their feeling of satisfaction. Limits of the older person's territory within the neighborhood are determined by several physical and social factors. The more suitable the environment, the larger the space he will be using.

A correlation was found to exist between a low level of education among older people, their social problems and the neighborhood in which they live. The prevailing atmosphere in deteriorating neighborhoods may cause older people to become distrustful, making it difficult for them to establish and maintain social relations (Krause, 1993). Physical obstacles in the neighborhood, such

as dark passages between buildings, broken stairs and distorted footpaths, may also hinder or deter older people from visiting each other (Caspi et al., 1987).

Carp's ecological approach considers physical and environmental conditions and social conditions to complement each other. The relationship between a person and his environment is therefore of importance. To adapt the environment to the needs of the older person, one must also consider the state of repair of the building's utility systems such as plumbing and electricity, as well as quality-of-life parameters of the neighborhood such as personal security, accessibility, and privacy (Carp, 1994).

Care of Older People by the Community

Modern society provides several housing options for the older population: Institutions for long term care, such as nursing homes with departments for the physically impaired; assisted living homes for independent older people who prefer to manage their own households; or letting older people who cannot or do not want to leave their homes, to remain to live in their natural environment (Tinker, 1997; Laczko & Victor, 1991; Warren & Walker, 1991).

Contrary to the common perception, data available show that most of the older people in developed countries actually live in the community (95%), and only a minority (5%) in institutions. More and more people above 65 with chronic disabilities who require continuing care by nursing personnel, prefer to remain living in their natural environment (Kunkel & Appelbaum, 1992). Older people receiving care at home were found to be more satisfied than those receiving such care in institutions (Woodruff & Applebaum, 1996; Tinker, 1997).

"Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities" operate in the USA and in Singapore, and provide services to older people in neighborhoods in which a large proportion of the residents are over 60. These communities are formed by natural demographic processes and by the migration of older people to these neighborhoods. They vary in size, from a single apartment building to an entire neighborhood, and vary in the service packages provided, from basic to very extensive (Administration on Aging, 1995).

The Supportive Communities in Israel

Supportive communities for older people began to operate in Israel more than ten years ago, and have since attained considerable momentum. At present there are about 88 such communities. Every supportive community cares for about 200 members who remain living at their home. Supportive communities have following staff members: A program manager, a personal support manager (male or female), and often also a social facilitator. The program manager is in charge of general management, guidance and training, and supervises the personal support manager's and the social facilitator's activities. The personal support manager is the key person in the program. He helps members to solve their day-to-day problems and is in current touch with all members of the supportive community, by mobile phone or by visiting them at home. When any special assistance is required, he will refer the member to the required person, e.g. the social worker. The social facilitator deals with organizing social activities and with recruiting and employing volunteers, who help with office work, keeping in touch with members and performing social activities. A 24 hours emergency call service is available, and every member has an emergency call button at his home. The emergency call service provides various medical services and minor home repairs. In case of illness, accompanied transportation is provided to the clinic or hospital and help is also provided in getting medications and in necessary shopping. Bathrooms in the homes of members are adapted for the safety of the older person. Some supportive communities have regular social activities at the social center. The supportive communities have been initiated by Eshel, an association for planning and development of services for the aged in Israel. They operate in cooperation with voluntary organizations, the government, local authorities and private enterprises. In their initial stage, Eshel subsidizes these programs, but these subsidies are gradually reduced to zero in course of the first three years (Thein, 2001).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this exploratory study were in the first place, to evaluate the operation of the supportive community program

and its staff and the effectiveness achieved in satisfying the needs and expectations of the elderly. Secondly, to examine the impact on the older population, of the physical conditions of the environment.

Methodology

Methodology of the study

The exploratory study was performed in two out of the 88 supportive communities operating in Israel, one in Jerusalem and the other in Zefat. At first, the two supportive communities were explored by observing their buildings and homes, their immediate physical environment and the neighborhood in which they are located. Personal interviews¹ were then conducted with staff members, including the program managers, personal support managers, managers of the social centers, and the manager for program development at the Eshel organization. Subsequently, satisfactory functioning of the supportive community was gauged through personal interviews with older people. The persons interviewed were asked to answer a short list of structured questions about their demographic characteristics, and a number of open questions that enabled them to express their opinion about the supportive community, their attachment to the neighborhood, their degree of participation, and whether the physical condition of the neighborhood are adequate in view of their disabilities. Their replies were carefully recorded and interpreted as ethnographic descriptions.

The field of study in Jerusalem

Jerusalem is a city with a population of 670,000, of which about 8.1% are elderly. The supportive community was established in a housing complex, originally built in 1952, on a 4.2 hectares (about 10 acres) site in the Kiriat Moshe neighborhood. It includes 17 multi-family buildings containing altogether 236 homes. Many are three story buildings, others are semi-detached. Most homes contain 1 ½ bedrooms, others 2 ½ bedrooms and some 3 bedrooms. Sizes of homes vary between 56 and 120 square meters (620 to 1330 sq. ft.). The original residents were middle to lower middle class, members of the Histadrut trade union, aged 30 to 40 at the

time they moved in, mostly married with one to three children. The residents were organized as a cooperative association, managed by a committee of volunteers. Common areas and public buildings were jointly owned.

In 1986, about 56% of all residents of the housing complex were older people. A program was established to provide supportive services for these older people, in the framework of a "supportive community." Retirees living in the housing complex and its near vicinity were offered to join the program and pay a membership fee. The program actually started in 1989 (Nir, 1994). By 2001 it had 200 members from 150 households. Initially, the program accepted only residents of the complex, but in the course of the following years people from the near vicinity were also accepted.

The Kiriath Moshe neighborhood is located close to a road with public transportation that provides convenient access to many services. Prices of homes in the neighborhood are relatively high, due to its location. A health care clinic and a dental surgery, a post office agency and several grocery stores have been operating for many years in the housing complex. In recent years however, the health care clinic and post office have moved elsewhere, and some of the grocery stores have closed down. A variety of social activities are being conducted at the social center located in the complex. For many residents, this social center is an important place of meeting and leisure activities, and also provides ready meals at a reasonable price.

The field of study in Zefat

Zefat is a relatively small town with a population of 26,000, of which 10.8% are elderly. Zefat was built on mountain slopes, is divided by its topography into separate neighborhoods and has many steep roads and stairways. Not all houses are accessible by car, causing difficulties to the physically impaired and the older people. The supportive community in Zefat started to operate in 2000. Its members are living spread across the entire town, and live in privately owned or public housing. Most buildings are old and neglected, four stories high, without an elevator. Most homes contain 1 ½ to 4 bedrooms. Most private houses are built on relatively large plots, rather isolated from neighboring houses, with many steps leading from the sidewalk to the entrance. Some

of the houses are small with 2 to 3 bedrooms, others have 4 bedrooms or more.

The Zefat supportive community consists of 200 members from 145 households, living in various parts of town. The personal support manager takes care of all 200 members, and therefore has to be of great "mobility" between different areas of town. His assistant is a social facilitator, who also provides personal support. The population of the supportive community in Zefat is very heterogeneous. Large socio-economic and cultural differences exist between members, who originate from countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, America, and the former Soviet Union. 23% were 71–75, and 45% were over 75. Some were independent, but most of them required assistance for mobility.

Five social centers with altogether 400 members,² are operated in different neighborhoods by the Zefat municipality, and provide social and cultural activities for the elderly.

Characteristics of the sample population

Characteristics of the sample population interviewed in Jerusalem were: 7 men and 18 women aged 76 to 93, their average age was 82. They have been living in the same housing complex for 7 and up to 50 years, 37 years on average. Twenty of those interviewed were members of the supportive community, but five were older persons living in the same building complex, who had decided not to join the program.³ All regarded themselves as middle class.

Characteristics of the sample population interviewed in Zefat were: 10 men and 32 women aged 60 to 93, their average age was 79. Twelve were not members of the program. They have been living in Zefat for 5 and up to 40 years, 25 years on average. Most of those living in Zefat for less than 10 years were new immigrants from the former Soviet Union. They were of varying socio-economic background, some regarded themselves as lower class, some lower middle class, and some middle to upper middle class.

Results of the Interviews

Following is a summary of the findings of the interviews, illustrated by typical quotations:

Neighborhood attachment

In Jerusalem, the great majority of those interviewed preferred to stay living at home at their older age, because they like their home and its environment. They indicated a strong attachment to their neighborhood, mainly because of their memories of the past. For example, a lady of 87 said: *"I have been living in this neighborhood for 51 years, this is where I raised my children, and my husband died here. This is my place and I won't leave."* A man of 76 said: *"Relations between neighbors used to be very close, very special, everybody knew everybody. Today it's different, young people have moved in, people don't know each other any more. However, this is what I am used to, I am part of the neighborhood and maybe the neighborhood is part of me. It's difficult to say, but I can't just suddenly leave."* However, several of those interviewed said they would prefer to live in assisted living homes, but could not afford to do so.

In Zefat, almost all of those interviewed indicated a strong attachment to their living environment and no desire to leave. A woman of 82 said: *"I have been living in Zefat for more than 40 years. I will not leave my home for anything on earth. I am an artist. I have been painting in Zefat all my life. I have my studio attached to my home and that's my working environment."* Another woman of 75 said: *"I have been living in my home for 43 years. I feel happy in this neighborhood and don't want to leave."* A man of 90 told us he had left his home and went to live in a senior citizens home, but he could not get used to it. He decided to return home and joined the supportive community. Among those who want to leave, some expressed feelings of loneliness. Some mentioned the difficult physical conditions. *"Wherever I go there are steps. To me, every step is like climbing a mountain, I would leave if I could."*

Functionality of the supportive community

In Jerusalem, nearly half of those interviewed said the personal support manager's services were the most important advantage of the program, others said it was the sense of personal security and others mentioned the importance of social activities and opportunities to meet other people. The great majority of the people were satisfied with the personal support manager's activities: *"He solves all problems."* *"We don't have to hesitate at all before calling him. We just press the button or dial his mobile phone"*

number and there he arrives, even in the middle of the night." This in contrast to the deliberations older people often have, when having to ask for help from their own family. *"I don't want to trouble my family, I'd rather suffer."* Most members of the supportive community use the personal support manager's services. Several among them said they often require his help for a variety of things. Most said they would only request his help for repairs, for medical care or when having to use a ladder. Some said they did not require his help, although they regarded his availability to be very important. Some remarked that they are reluctant to trouble the personal support manager, except for very urgent or critical matters. *"You can't have 150 people on one person's back. I don't want to add more on top of his workload. I'd call him only for urgent medical needs"*.

In Zefat, those interviewed said their main reason for joining the supportive community was to be connected to the emergency call system. Almost all of them were very satisfied with the emergency call service, because of the sense of security it provides: *"What's most important is the feeling of security, the peace of mind of knowing you are not alone, that you can call for help any time and be sure they will come immediately. After having had a CVI, my husband is afraid to leave me alone at home."* Some complained it took a long time before the doctor arrives. The emergency button is not only for medical care: *"It could happen that while my husband is traveling abroad a water pipe would burst, or there could be an electrical power cut, but I can call the personal support manager."* Most of them emphasized the importance of the personal support manager's visits and their satisfaction with his functioning in general. Some emphasized his help in arranging things in town: *"I can't see very well, I am all alone and need some help to go shopping, to go to the bank or to see the doctor. The personal support manager will take me by car to those places and will buy my medications."* Others praised the personal support manager as a liaison with the establishment and as a social contact: *"The personal support manager helps us in writing letters to various authorities to obtain social security payments. He also visits us regularly, which is very good, I am glad when he comes."* On the other hand, some of those interviewed are reluctant to call the personal support manager, because of his heavy workload and would ask him to come only when necessary.

Getting to the Social Center

In Jerusalem, the supportive community contains a center for social activities for its members. The older people get there by themselves, but are provided with transportation to return home. Some members said they regularly visit the social center, they like being there and like the activities. One of them said: *"Having to go to the social center every Monday makes me get up early in the morning and shave, to look neat and respectable"*, and his wife added: *"If it weren't for that, he wouldn't have shaved."* Apartment buildings without elevators, distorted footpaths and many stairs in public areas, all severely inhibit older people's mobility. More and more people have stopped visiting the social center because of these difficulties, and are disappointed that there are no regular home visits to those who have difficulties leaving their home.

In Zefat, many members of the supportive community are of limited mobility and therefore cannot get to the social center, as described by a woman of 82: *"Once I had fractured my skull and once I had broken my leg. Taking a taxi won't help, because it's difficult for me to get from the road to the building, and the taxi driver won't help me to get there."* Another older person added: *"In Zefat you have stairs and dark alleys everywhere, older people cannot cope with these without help. The sidewalks are impossible. I fell on the sidewalk three times."* Zefat lacks provisions for accessibility by people with impaired mobility. A woman in a wheel chair complained: *"I can't get out of the house in a wheel chair. Wherever you go you've got steps and stairs on which you can't move in a wheel chair."* *"In the old part of town it's just terrible, there are no railings to the stairs, and no ramps."* Another woman explained that she used to go to the social center, but now it has become difficult for her to walk, so she has stopped going there. Independent older people also complained about accessibility problems: *"There are many potholes in the sidewalks and there aren't many footpaths you can easily walk on. At night I'm afraid to go out because we haven't got street lighting everywhere, and many lamps don't work."*

The physical environment

In Jerusalem, the supportive community has tried to adapt the environment to older people's special needs. The city council added 22 street lamps in the supportive community complex.

Railings have been installed along the footpaths between buildings and edges of footpaths have been marked with fluorescent paint. The footpaths are however made of rough concrete and are not level. Nearly all of those interviewed would not leave their homes in the afternoon or evening. A man of 78 said: *"They've marked sidewalks and footpaths, to make it easier for older people. They've even addend lighting, but not everywhere. However, many obstacles still remain. In any case, my friends and I keep on falling."*

In Zefat, the municipality has overhauled some streets, without sufficiently considering any special requirements for older people with impaired mobility. A woman of 79 said: *"Zefat is not for me because of all those stairs, holes and rubble. They've overhauled roads and resurfaced them with stones, but older people can't walk there. The stones are with gaps between them in which my walking cane gets stuck, and that's very dangerous."*

Physical adaptation of the homes of the elderly

In Jerusalem, attempts were made to adapt the homes of members of the supportive community to the needs of older people. Residents were encouraged to have handgrips fixed to the walls of their homes, at a nominal charge. However, only a few of them agreed to have this done, nor could they be convinced to have their bathtub replaced by a shower. One of them explained: *"Older people don't like any changes, even if they are to their own benefit."* Another woman described her difficulty as follows: *"I have been living on the third floor for years. I loved my home and I was used to the view that could be seen from there. When I got older, an apartment became available downstairs. My children had convinced me that since the building has no elevator, I should change my apartment for the one downstairs. I listened to them but I regret it now. Though this apartment is suitable for me, the view is not the same. I don't like this apartment."* The lack of an elevator in these buildings has caused many older people to remain "stuck" at home. One woman said she had not left her home for a year and a half.

The situation in Zefat was very similar. A woman of 84 living on the second floor said she hardly ever gets out of her home because of her difficulty in walking the stairs. However, older people of higher socio-economic status will be more inclined to adapt their homes. A woman of 68 living together with her

husband of 69 in a private house said: *"We have been living in this house for 30 years. This house hasn't really been built for older people. There are a lot of steps from the road to the entrance of the house. We are now building a railing along the stairs, someday we will need it."*

Neglect of buildings

Since Kiriat Moshe is a middle class neighborhood in Jerusalem, the authorities would not allocate any funds for renewal of the supportive community's housing. The high cost, a reluctance to take on responsibility and the trouble involved deter members of the supportive community from refurbishing their buildings. Many said: *"We will leave this to our children."* As a result, appearance of the housing complex has been deteriorating from year to year. Some of those interviewed felt embarrassed. A woman of 70 said: *"Our housing complex doesn't look anymore as it used to, when buildings, staircases and yards were all nice and neat."*

In Zefat, new neighborhoods of small houses with gardens were built in the 1990s, attracting middle class young couples and families. This has led to aging of some of the older neighborhoods. A woman described this as follows: *"Because younger people have left the neighborhood, the neighborhood is now being neglected. The municipality does look after garbage collection, but has stopped spending any money on gardening."* Most buildings inhabited by older people are deteriorating because *"Older people won't refurbish the building in which they live. They are hardly able to cope with simple household tasks."*

Discussion

Satisfaction with the functioning of the supportive community

Since this study is of an exploratory nature based on only two out of 88 supportive communities operating in Israel and the number of persons interviewed was rather small, it would not be right to draw definite conclusions from its findings. Nevertheless, it appears from these limited findings that the supportive community does provide a satisfactory and affordable arrangement for older people, provided its physical environment is properly adapted. All in all, the supportive communities studied, both in Jerusalem and in Zefat, seem to be operating to the satisfaction of

a vast majority of their members, in spite of the great differences in characteristics of their populations and in their geographical and physical conditions. And, if it weren't for the services provided by the supportive community, many of the older people would have had to leave their natural environment and move into senior citizen homes or other institutions.

Of particular importance are the services provided by the personal support manager, who received a lot of praise by nearly all members interviewed. The personal support manager's services are crucial in enabling older persons to continue to live in their natural environment. He helps the older people in many matters, solves their technical and mobility problems and acts as a liaison with the authorities. He provides members with a sense of security, knowing that he can always be called upon, which is so extremely important to older people. In Zefat, where members of the supportive community are living all over town, the personal support manager's home visits, his help with mobility and doing errands in town, were of utmost importance. Some members will call the personal support manager more frequently than others. He therefore has to use his judgment and allocate his priorities as the case may be. 200 members seem to be about the maximum number of people he can handle, depending on their health condition. The best way to off-load the personal support manager somewhat should be to make more use of volunteers, particularly for home visits.

In Jerusalem, members who were independent enough to get to the social center were very much satisfied with its social activities. In Zefat, no regular social activities were possible within the framework of the supportive community because of the spread out location of its members.

The close physical environment

Problems of the close physical environment are mainly concerned with the mobility of older people and their safety. Without adaptation of the physical environment, the older person's natural environment will gradually shrink. In Jerusalem, in spite of some improvements, walking the footpaths between buildings was still hazardous for older people. Absence of elevators has caused many older people to remain at home, or considerably

limited their going out. In Zefat, conditions of the physical environment were unsatisfactory for elderly people all over the town, particularly sidewalks and access paths between the sidewalk and the entrance to the homes of elderly people. Many people required the personal support manager's help in overcoming problems of accessibility.

The close physical environment should be improved to such a degree that people of impaired mobility should be able to walk there safely during the day and at night, or move about in their wheelchair, as the case may be. Multi-story buildings should be retrofitted with elevators, with internal or external elevator shafts. Such upgrades have been successfully performed in many building complexes in Israel, at a reasonably low cost, far less than the increase in real estate value of the upgraded homes. Also, adding benches and shaded corners along the footpaths, close to the buildings, could enable people with limited mobility to sit outside their house.

Spread and layout of the supportive community

Closer distances between the homes of members of the supportive community, and between these and the social center and public services, should improve the functioning of the supportive community. The personal support manager will have more time available for every member, it will be easier for older members to visit each other and the social center, to see the doctor or do their essential shopping. Also, closer distances will make it much more affordable to adapt the common physical environment to the needs of older people. Supportive communities should therefore be located in areas densely populated by older people, to achieve a membership of about 200 within a relatively small area. This is even more critical where the local topography makes adaptation of the physical environment very costly. Obviously, little can be done about already existing supportive communities in this respect.

A social center providing regular social activities is important. It will stimulate older people to get out of the house and enjoy social community life. Where possible, essential services should be relocated near to the older people's homes. Nearby public buildings and commercial areas should also be adapted to the needs of older people.

Aging of the population and urban decline

In general, studies dealing with older people do not refer to the effects of physical aging of the living environment, such as deterioration of buildings and the surrounding infrastructure, while studies of "neighborhood revitalization" (Gale, 1990, and others) do not refer to the inability of older people to take care of their environment and prevent its physical decay. The literature deals almost exclusively with physical decay of neighborhoods of low socio-economic class populations. However, aging urban enclaves may also be inhabited by middle-class older people. Due to older people's limitations, the physical environment of their neighborhood is bound to deteriorate, unless action is taken to prevent this. Neglect will cause devaluation of the real estate value, which initially might have been fairly high, thereby further accelerating the deterioration process. This in turn will vastly increase the cost of refurbishment in the future. A concentration of older people in areas of aging enclaves enables an integrated and cost effective response to their needs, which could be provided by means of supportive communities, and combined with improvement of the physical environment.

Financing

Although supportive communities are by far the least expensive solution for housing elderly people, they nevertheless require public funding. We thought to suggest the following approach for financing and managing the improvements: Since members of the supportive community will not initiate the required maintenance of buildings and adaptation of the physical environment, this will have to be done by the supportive community managers. In the case of publicly owned buildings, he would have to convince the authorities, in the interest of both maintaining the real estate value of the buildings and of social considerations of the well-being of the older population, to budget the cost of maintenance and adaptation of buildings. Where residents are the homeowners, the program manager would have to convince them that it is in their interest and that of their children to properly maintain and adapt their buildings. Since he would be managing these activities and arrange favorable bank loans for the residents, they would not have to bother about it. With regard to adaptation

of the physical environment, this would have to be funded by municipal or national authorities. A relatively small investment in current maintenance of buildings and public areas and adaptation of the physical environment to the needs of older people, could maintain the quality of life of the older population, while maintaining the real estate value of buildings and the status of the neighborhood in the urban fabric.

In a sense, such an approach would also be a repayment of a debt by the community to the older generation, by avoiding that law-abiding, tax-paying citizens, upon reaching old age, should suddenly find themselves living in unrespectable deteriorating neighborhoods, unsuitable for their needs.

Conclusions

1. Supportive communities can provide a satisfactory solution to the needs of older people, while enabling them to continue living in their natural environment in safety and security, what most of them prefer. Their day-to-day needs are taken care of, social activities are available for independent older people, and home visits are arranged for those with impaired mobility. The personal support manager of the supportive community is the key-person in providing those essential services that enable the older person to continue to live in his natural environment.

2. It was found to be very important to include all aspects of the physical environment in planning the establishment, location and improvement of a supportive community. This implies adapting the close physical environment to provide safety and enable mobility and accessibility for physically impaired older people. It also implies a careful study of the location and layout of the supportive community and limiting its geographical spread, so that distances between buildings are short and an easily accessible social center and public facilities are available.

3. Establishing supportive communities in aging enclosures in cities, if combined with physical maintenance of their buildings and their public space, may well prevent deterioration of those neighborhoods and avoid a devaluation of their real estate, at a relatively low cost.

4. Since this paper presents the results of an exploratory study

only, based on a very limited sample size, it should be very desirable to conduct additional studies in other neighborhoods, to substantiate the above conclusions.

Notes

1. See Carp, 1994, and La Gory et al., 1985, who emphasized the importance of personal interviews among population groups as compared with any other method of data collecting.
2. Source: E. Benjamin, Plan for Multi-Service Center for the Elderly, Zefat Municipality internal publ.
3. Many older people who had not joined the program could not be interviewed because of their physical condition.

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Self-help Group Participation and Empowerment in Hong Kong

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This paper reports on the first comprehensive study of self-help groups in Hong Kong. Initial findings from the quantitative and qualitative data suggest that self-help group participation has an impact on intrapersonal, interpersonal and community/political empowerment. Based on existing data, this study has resulted in the development of a hypothetical model encompassing the interrelationships among self-help group participation, social support, social learning, leadership and empowerment, for testing in future research.

Key words: intrapersonal empowerment, interpersonal empowerment, community/ political empowerment, social support, social learning, leadership

Participation empowers! When participants interact with each other to make meaningful changes and to assert influences individually and collectively, empowerment occurs. Past research has shown that participation and empowerment are closely related (Berger & Neuhaus, 1977; Schulz et al., 1995; Rappaport, 1987; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). However, this relationship may be complex and complicated. Itzhaky and Schwartz (1988) found that not all the elements of empowerment are affected by all the elements of participation. Itzhaky and York (2000) further suggest that the relationship between participation and empowerment can be erratic, although the former can well be an antecedent of the latter. When participation affects empowerment, the path can be direct, indirect or combined (Zimmerman, 1990; Prestby et al., 1990; Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Speer & Hughes, 1995).

Participation in self-help groups certainly help members to empower themselves (Chesler, 1991; Nylund, 2000; Mok, 2001). Self-help group activities empower members to cope with problems and stresses, and they also empower members in their relations with the organizations that serve them, and with the community where they live. Empirically, it was found that participation in self-help group activities is instrumental in reducing family burden, loneliness, and guilt-feeling, and at a macro-level, self-help group members' advocacy activities can affect government policies (Citron, et al., 1999; Medvene & Krauss, 1989). The strong correlation between self-help group participation and self-confidence, self-efficacy, civil responsibility, and political efficacy has also been supported in research studies (Florin & Wandersman, 1984; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988).

Various social science theories, such as the theories of affiliation, attribution, change, coping, deviance and social exchange provide some explanation of why participation in self-help groups empowers members. Steward (1990) concluded, after synthesizing some theoretical and empirical studies, that the provision of social support and social learning in self-help groups is the major factor in self-help group effectiveness. In a study of three organizations (one of which was a mutual help organization for persons with severe mental illness), Maton and Salem (1995) found that the reason why they are so empowering is because they have a belief system that inspires growth; an opportunity role structure that is pervasive, highly accessible and multi-functional; a support system that is encompassing, peer-based, and cohesive; and leadership that is inspiring, talented and shared.

The relationship between self-help group participation and empowerment has been widely discussed, but very few studies have been conducted in a Chinese context. Are self-help group members in Chinese communities empowered individually and collectively after joining these groups? What are the covariates of self-help group empowerment in such contexts? This paper explores and analyses these questions, based on a pioneering and comprehensive study of self-help groups in Hong Kong. It is contended that self-help group participation in Chinese communities should lead to individual and collective empowerment, as is the case in Western communities. It is further argued that

participating in self-help groups will enable members to obtain social support and social learning opportunities which have a direct and indirect effect on empowerment. Finally, the author believes that the leadership of self-help groups could have an impact on empowerment. A hypothetical model with regard to the interrelationships among self-help group participation, social support, social learning, leadership and empowerment is developed for testing in future research.

In Hong Kong, self-help groups for vulnerable populations proliferated in the 1980's. They have been formed to serve a wide range of populations, including the mentally ill and their families (Ma, 1992), battered women (Ko & Chang, 1994), persons with disabilities and their care-givers (Chan, 1991), single parents (Cheung & Ng, 1989), and senior citizens (Mok & Mui, 1996). Patient self-help groups were also established by medical social workers, or other medical professionals to provide support and assistance for people with various chronic illnesses (Wong, 1996; Liu, 1997; Chan et al., 1996). Although self-help groups in Hong Kong have grown in an unprecedented speed, there has been little knowledge about their nature and operation. One of the reasons may be attributed to the lack of systematic research and solid methodological foundations. Little was known about how helpful self-help groups are to members, and what kind of social impact they have produced. The research component of the self-help phenomenon has clearly been eclipsed by the self-help movement itself.

Method

Using a simple random sampling method, 100 out of the 211 self-help groups that have been identified in a previous study (Mok et al., 2002) were selected and all members of the selected groups were invited to participate in this study during the period of December, 1999 to April, 2000. They were requested to fill out a structured, self-administered questionnaire in a group with the help of one or two research assistants, depending on the size of the group. These group interviews were normally arranged on the same day as the groups' regular meetings (before, during or after the meeting, according to their preference). If this was

inconvenient or impossible, a special meeting for the purpose of this research was organized. The questionnaire was completed in about 30–45 minutes. Each participant was given a small souvenir of HK\$15 (about US\$2) as appreciation for their participation in the study. A total of 719 valid questionnaires were finally completed.

In addition to the questionnaire survey, in-depth interviews and participant observation were carried out with 10 groups, which were purposively selected to represent different types of self-help group. The aim of the in-depth interviews and participant observation, among others, was to understand how the groups empower the members, and why they succeed or fail to achieve their group goals.

In this study, the empowerment effect of self-help groups was studied from the members' perspective. Data collected was basically subjective, and the research adopted a cross-sectional survey design, supplemented by qualitative, in-depth interviews and participant observation. Ideally, objective data from a more rigorous design such as experimental or quasi-experimental design would yield more reliable and valid findings. However, given the exploratory—descriptive nature of this study (the first Hong Kong-wide research), the present design and method of data collection are viable and realistic approaches. It is also noted that in the self-help research literature, the use of subjective measurements and a cross-sectional survey design are acceptable, although not necessarily conventional practices.

Background of Respondents

There are many different self-help groups in Hong Kong based on the types of common problem that members share. In this study, respondents participated in a variety of these groups, ranging from groups for the chronically ill, groups for persons with mental illness, groups for the physically and mentally disabled, to other social/marginal groups such as single parents, families on welfare, divorced women, new arrivals from Mainland China, and rehabilitated drug abusers. The findings show that most respondents belong to the chronically ill groups (46.7%) followed by those who are members of the physically/mentally

disabled groups (21.8%), the social/marginal groups (16.6%) and the mentally ill groups (14.9%). There were more female than male members in all groups, especially in the social/marginal groups which had many single parents, families on welfare and new arrivals from Mainland China. Most respondents were between 30–60 years old, indicating that most self-help group members are normally adults or older persons. The majority of respondents had a low educational level, ranging from primary level or below (34.8%), to lower secondary education (24.9%). This is especially true for the social/marginal groups, with 76% of the members having an educational level of lower secondary or below. Over 60% of the respondents were married, but a substantial number were divorced (9.2%) and widowed (7.9%). Again, the figures for the social/marginal group members (34% and 13% respectively) were significantly higher than those of other groups. On employment status, about one third of the respondents were employed in one way or another and 12% were unemployed. It was noted that over half of the respondents were either housewives (31.8%) or retired (19.2%).

The findings also show that respondents' participation in their self-help groups is not particularly long; three quarters of them remained with their group for four years or less. Their participation in the groups, however, is regular and for some members, quite frequent. Most of them (37%) attended group meetings/activities monthly, while some did so weekly (10%) and bi-weekly (18%).

Self-help Group Participation and Empowerment

As pointed out rightly by Rappaport (1985), the absence of empowerment is easy to notice, but its presence is difficult to define. Over the years, researchers have attempted to operationalize the concept of empowerment in various ways (Rappaport, 1987; Zimmerman, 1996; Dunst et al., 1992; Zimmerman, 1995; Rich et al., 1995). In this study, empowerment is conceptualized as a process through which members of self-help groups gain power at intrapersonal, interpersonal and political/community levels (Parsons, 1995; Gutierrez et al., 1998). Intrapersonal empowerment was measured by the self-help group members' perception

of their ability to make personal changes or choices. Measures of interpersonal empowerment include the extent to which members can relate positively to others. Political/community empowerment was measured by members' perception of their ability to influence community attitudes and social policies.

A total of 14 statements / questions on the three levels of empowerment were posed to the respondents, and their answers are summarized below.

The findings clearly indicate that members of the self-help groups surveyed had a rather strong perception of being empowered as a result of self-help group participation. At the intrapersonal level, an overwhelming majority of the respondents felt that since joining the self-help group, they had become more positive (95%), more hopeful (92.6%), more open (91.2%), more gregarious (93.3%), more decisive in taking action (88.5%) and most importantly, more confident in solving their problems (93.7%). At the interpersonal level of empowerment, there was also a great majority who responded that since joining their self-help group, they had become more capable of helping others (93.1%), had learnt to care for others (95.6%), to get along well with others (95.2%), and to understand more about their rights (94.6%) and obligations (92.7%) in society. In terms of political/community empowerment, a substantial number of respondents (53.1%) agreed that their self-help group could help to change society's attitudes towards vulnerable populations, to become more understanding and accepting, and less discriminating. However, when asked about whether their self-help group could impact on social policies, such as welfare, health and housing policies, only one third of them agreed. This finding indicates that members' sense of community/political empowerment is not as strong as their sense of intrapersonal and interpersonal empowerment.

Members' feeling of being empowered in the self-help groups was further supported by the data obtained in the in-depth interviews. As an example, a stoma cancer patient used to be very dependent on the advice of his doctor but later developed strong confidence in problem solving by means of sharing and joint effort in the group. He said: *"The doctors give you theory, that is, they talk about how things can be theoretically. But on a practical level, it can be our problem. An example is farting. As long as we move our body, there*

will be gas. Then the bag will be inflated. The doctor's advice is that you go to the toilet and let go of the air. But how can you go to the toilet all day to let go of the air? So we teach them to pin a hole in the bag and tape it. Then we just have to take off the tape and put it back, then the smell will not go out as much."

This feeling of empowerment did not stop at the individual level, but extended to the interpersonal level. A member of a pneumoconiosis self-help group recalled an unforgettable experience when he visited another group member who was admitted to the hospital because of breathing difficulty: *"When he saw me, he started crying and holding my hands with his hands tightly. He was a quiet member in the group, but this time I saw him, he had so much to talk to me about. I felt that my sheer presence there was so warm, so helpful and so therapeutic to him. I felt that I could help others and could make a difference."*

In some instances, the self-help groups acted collectively to express their concern on matters affecting their lives, to change community attitudes and to fight for their rights. For example, a self-help group for the physically handicapped complained to the Equal Opportunity Commission about the lack of public facilities in the building of their office to cater for their special needs. They also met with officials of the Transport Department and bus companies to voice their concern on the mass transportation system with regard to the needs of the physically handicapped. A parent group (with cleft lip and palate children) has actively organized exhibitions, media interviews and community education programs to eliminate community misunderstanding towards, and discrimination against cleft lip and palate patients, and to seek support and acceptance from the general public.

In short, responses from the questionnaire and in-depth interviews pointed to the same conclusion: Self-help group participation has an empowerment effect, intrapersonally, interpersonally and collectively.

Social Support and Social Learning in the Self-help Groups

Why are self-help groups so empowering? Two possible factors were identified in this study: Social support and social learning.

Members of self-help groups perceive that they obtain a great deal of benefit from their groups in terms of receiving help from others (94.4%), meeting others with similar problems (98.5%), developing coping strategies (96.9%), knowing more about social resources (96.8%) and fostering a sense of belonging to the group (96.6%). The support they experienced through the self-help group was overwhelming as evidenced by their highly positive answers to the statements in the questionnaire.

Indeed, one of the biggest benefits of joining self-help groups is meeting people who have the same condition when feelings of pain and suffering can be shared, and mutual support developed. The following statements from members of self-help groups are revealing:

"Very often when you are sick, the most important thing is fear. How do I care for myself? There are a lot of worries. Even relatives and friends may not be able to help because they may not understand. When patients get in touch with cancer self-help groups, they find many peers here. They feel a strong sense of identification and support. They often see many friends here. So many people give their testimonials and everyone is sitting here. If they ask around, they will find this one got the disease so many years ago, the other one so many years ago, etc. Somehow they feel some kind of encouragement indirectly."

"The treatment is a huge challenge to cancer patients because the process is quite tough and painful, both physically and mentally. They are really tough. But very often they get support from other patients here. Sometimes the treatment is hard and they would call here. When we exchange greetings, we already feel the support. Sometimes we talk about how badly we throw up, or how many times we throw up. Oh yeah, that time I threw up eight times. If you throw up five times it is not that bad. Sometimes it is fun. Sometimes just these conversations can make us feel better."

"We feel that this group of people are all waiting at the specialty clinic because this is a special clinic for cleft lip and palate children . . . When us parents sit together, we would talk. As long as we are carrying a child with cleft lip and palate, we would sit together and talk and share our care for the kid. Then we would feel better."

In addition to social support, the self-help group provides ample opportunities for social learning for its members. As recalled

by members, there were many activities related to formal and informal instruction, and role modeling. For example, the single parents' group regularly held training courses on personal development, parenting skills, household maintenance and voluntary social services; the group for families of mental patients organized medical and health seminars and communication workshops to enable group members to take care of their loved ones at home; and the parents' group of cleft lip and palate children held medical seminars with topics surrounding reconstructive surgery, dentistry, orthodontics, and speech theory. The cancer self-help group, on the other hand, conducted activities that were of a more philosophical nature. The chairman of the group said: *"Our education: The ultimate fear of a cancer patient is death. Everyone is afraid to die. We teach them to accept death. To put it simply, of course we cannot name the topic to be death. We have had a large-scale lecture for three weeks in a row. The title is the value of life. That is, we use different names to describe these seminars, hoping to educate our members. We welcome people from outside too. We would like them to accept this matter of death . . . that it is something unavoidable. So if you can accept death, what else are you afraid of? That's the only fear you have . . . Right? The worst is you are going to die. If you are not even afraid of death, we hope . . . that is, the time you have now is precious."*

The regular self-help group meetings are important events for members to listen to others and learn to cope with their own problems. This type of informal learning occurred all the time in each of the 10 self-help groups under study. More significantly, members' social learning was not limited to dealing with their personal and emotional problems. They also learned more about their rights and the social resources that are instrumental to promoting their well-being.

Role modeling was common according to those members involved in the in-depth interviews. In the parents' group of cleft lip and palate children, experienced members were responsible to guide the incoming parents of affected newborns in all aspects. They exchange phone numbers so that immediate advice and help can be provided. The parents' group for the mentally ill children identified some senior members to teach the new members the best ways to take care of their children.

The preceding analysis indicates that self-help groups provide tremendous social support for members and they create ample opportunities for social learning in the group. Attaining social support and the benefit of learning from others appears to make members feel stronger, help them foster a spirit of hope and enable them to develop a higher level of social consciousness.

Leadership and Empowerment

The findings from the in-depth interviews show that strong leaders have a formidable impact on the formation, development and survival of the self-help groups.

The cancer self-help group is a typical example: Its founder was a breast cancer survivor. After recovering from breast cancer, she intended to do something to help breast cancer patients. As a result, she opened a shop selling products to breast cancer patients such as artificial breasts and special bras to suit their special needs. Every time she did business with the customers, she showed concern for their health condition and had much to share with them about her own rehabilitation experience. Her conviction that she could provide information on cancer rehabilitation and give emotional support to her customers, convinced her that she should set up a sharing group for breast cancer patients. The first meeting was held in a corner of the shop and attended by nine people. However, as the meetings continued, progressively more people were attracted to join the group.

As the group grew bigger, the shop became too small for the meetings. With the help of a social worker, the group was able to secure financial support from the Hong Kong Cancer Fund to rent a place for regular meetings and to hire a full-time staff officer to implement its services. At this point, the founder believes that in helping others, the group members were actually helping themselves in building up their confidence and ability to solve their own problems. She encouraged group members to visit other cancer patients in the hospital to give them support and encouragement.

Under the strong leadership of the founder, the group has grown from a small group of 9 people to a larger group consisting of over 1,000 members. The founder, together with other leaders

in the group, have decided to join the Alliance for Patient's Mutual Help organizations which is renowned for its social action activities. In so doing, they believe that they could further benefit members by influencing social policies and fighting for their rights.

Conclusion and Discussion

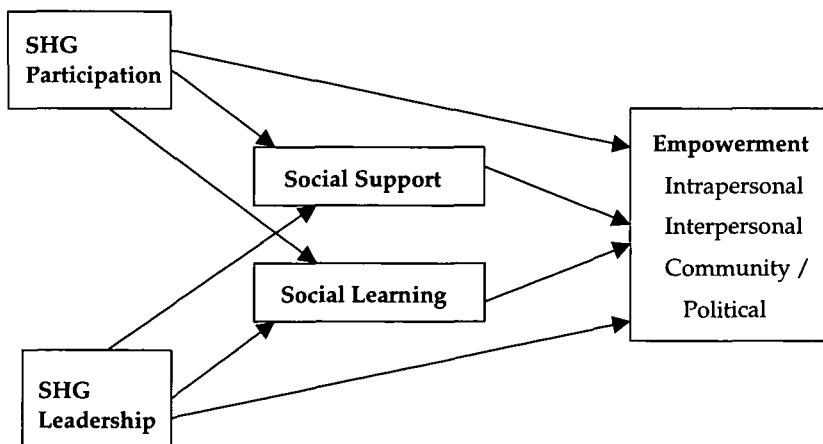
In this study, a major finding from the quantitative and qualitative data indicates that self-help group participation has an empowerment effect on participants individually, interpersonally and collectively. However, the finding also shows that while an overwhelming majority of respondents have attained a high degree of intrapersonal and interpersonal empowerment, a remarkably smaller number of them felt that they could impact on social policies or public attitudes. This is in contrast with the situation of self-help groups in Western countries. In the United States of America, for example, self-help groups have been in the forefront of social change—they not only empower individuals, but also lead to political activism. Gartner & Riessman (1998) pointed at that the self-help movement has become an important part of the social fabric of American life and that self-help represents a new political potential. In Finland, a study (Nylund, 2000) shows that over 40% of self-help groups have socially oriented goals, including collective goals to promote employment, prevent social exclusion and raise the status of single parents; welfare reform goals to provide better welfare and unemployment benefits and promote cooperation between patients and professionals; and advocacy goals to influence legislation and alter public attitudes.

Why then, have Hong Kong self-help group members felt relatively powerless in influencing social policies? First, self-help groups in Hong Kong are still in the early stage of development. Most groups devote their energy and resources to helping members cope with their personal problems, and impacting on social policy is not seen as their priority. Secondly, most self-help groups in Hong Kong serve the vulnerable populations - the chronically ill, the disabled, and the socially handicapped. It is not surprising to find that they often feel powerless and consumed with low-esteem. Finally, the small size of most self-help groups in Hong

Kong is a significant negative factor affecting their ability to influence social policies. Therefore, it is important for self-help groups in Hong Kong to organize and form links with each other, so that they can impact on policies that affect their lives.

Another major finding in this study suggests that social support, social learning, and leadership are closely linked with empowerment. While social support and social learning were identified as possible contributing factors to self-help group empowerment, strong leaders were considered instrumental in empowering members individually and the group as a whole. This finding is consistent with the theories and empirical findings in the self-help literature (Bloom et al., 1991; Caplan, 1979; Cohen & Wills, 1985; Bandura, 1986; Katz, 1993; Kurtz, 1997; Maton & Salem, 1995; King et al., 2000). However, the linkage among the major variables as shown in this study is preliminary. The interrelationships of self-help group participation, social support, social learning, leadership and empowerment have been explored but not yet firmly substantiated. Based on existing data, a hypothetical model of self-help group participation and empowerment is presented below:

A Hypothetical Model of Self-help Group (SHG) Participation and Empowerment



The model proposes that social support and social learning are two important social/ psychological processes affected by self-help group participation and self-help group leadership, and both processes are believed to bolster empowerment. Specifically, self-help group participation and self-help group leadership have a direct effect on empowerment, social support and social learning, and they also have an indirect effect on empowerment through their interaction with social support and social learning. In turn, social support and social learning affect empowerment directly.

Implicit in this model is a set of research questions that need to be asked and answered. For example: To what extent does the length and intensity of self-help group participation affect different levels of empowerment (intrapersonal, interpersonal and collective/community/ political levels)? What is the impact of leadership style (democratic vs. autocratic) and nature of leadership (lay vs. professional) on empowerment? How do SHG participation and leadership interact with social support and social learning in producing an indirect effect on empowerment? What degree of impact do social support and social learning have on empowerment?

This model is intended to be hypothetical as the relationships among the major variables requires further empirical evidence if firm conclusions are to be drawn. Though hypothetical, it provides direction for future self-help research in Hong Kong. Findings from this study indicate that self-help group participation empowers participants, but further and more specific analyses of self-help group effects are warranted.

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Book Reviews

David Ranney, *Global Decisions, Local Collisions: Urban Life in the New World Order*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003. \$69.50 paperback.

This book offers a critical, neo-Marxist account of the postindustrial restructuring of the United States. Ranney examines the worldwide expansion of competitive capitalism and the corresponding decline of manufacturing in the nation's rustbelt, focusing on how these transformations have adversely affected the poor and working classes of Chicago.

To develop a philosophical basis for his study, Ranney builds on propositions that are rooted in Marxism and critical social science. He argues that, under capitalism, the worth of an activity is determined solely by the monetary price that the activity brings in the marketplace, and thus, socially valued goals are subordinated to economic efficiency. He further maintains that space, place, and time are not physical realities; rather, they are socially defined constructs, and their constraints on social action are mutable. These propositions will be readily accepted by those who share Ranney's ideological views. Yet, readers who question the theoretical and empirical bases of Marxism and critical social science will have reservations about their validity and will, therefore, have serious doubts about many of Ranney's subsequent assertions and conclusions.

Analyses of deindustrialization and the international spread of competitive capitalism follow this discussion. Ranney presents his neo-Marxist interpretation of the decline of Fordism (i.e., the domestic mass production of goods for domestic consumption) in the U.S. and the rise of conservative politics, freewheeling financial speculation, global mobility of capital, and exploitation of Third World labor. Emphasizing the salience of ideas, he claims that the Nobel Laureate economists Milton Friedman and Gary Becker have played crucial roles in the emergence of this "new world order" by supplying the theoretical justifications for the expansion of free market policies and the cutbacks of social welfare programs. Ranney then studies the collapse of manufacturing in Chicago, describing job losses, business failures, and

personal hardships, often drawing from his own experiences as a blue-collar worker, community activist, and professor of urban planning in that city. This presentation of data and anecdotes is engaging, and even those readers who take issue with the neo-Marxist perspective will find it to be thought provoking.

In an interesting study of urban politics, Ranney next explores the dynamics of the local government of Chicago, analyzing the challenge made by Harold Washington, the city's first black mayor, to the political machine of longtime mayor, Richard J. Daley. Ranney focuses on the city's public policy responses to the fiscal crises that were exacerbated by the demise of Fordism. He argues that Washington, elected by an *ad hoc* coalition of minorities and white liberals, attempted to retain industrial jobs and fairly redistribute resources but was thwarted by an alliance of traditional Daley supporters and pro-business elites that split this coalition apart by exploiting class and racial divisions. The efforts of this alliance, Ranney asserts, culminated in the election of Daley's son, Richard M. Daley, to the office of mayor and facilitated the city's adaptation to the new world order at the expense of the poor. While this account is heavily biased in favor of Washington's agenda, few readers will disagree with Ranney's conclusion that a local government can do little to protect its constituents from the adverse effects of global postindustrial change.

This examination of the political economy of Chicago is extended in an analysis of housing. Ranney vividly describes how, during the era of urban renewal, blacks in the city were concentrated into ghettos by the wholesale demolition of low-rent housing and by the ambitious construction of large, racially segregated public housing complexes. He then argues forcefully that the recent decline of federal and local governmental support for housing assistance to the poor has been driven by the capitalistic idea that shelter is not a basic human right but a commodity whose allocation must be determined by supply and demand. To document the effects of this approach, Ranney presents anecdotal reports of the residential displacement of low-income blacks by the gentrification of Chicago's inner-city communities. This case study, particularly the historical background, is well-researched and will be of interest to students of urban studies and city planning; many readers will, however, want dispassionate, quan-

titative evidence about the extent to which poor residents have been displaced by the renovation of neighborhoods.

The book concludes with essays that Ranney hopes will inspire a new strategy of collective action to challenge the new world order and create a society that will, in his opinion, provide "living wages" and "affordable housing." He claims that the location-specific tactics that were used to organize the lower- and working-classes in the past—notably, those devised by activist Saul Alinsky—are no longer relevant in a world dominated by transnational businesses; hence, an alternative form of organization is needed. On the final page, Ranney thus proposes that the ideas of the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, could be used to promote an educational campaign to foster awareness of global-local connections among those who are adversely affected by the expansion of competitive capitalism. This brief discussion is, unfortunately, underdeveloped, and it will dissatisfy those who are looking for clear and specific guidelines for social activism.

In sum, this book contains some informative case studies, but overall, it contributes little in the way of unique insights or new directions for future research, and it will be more favorably received by critical neo-Marxists than by mainstream social scientists.

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Stephen L. Ross and John Yinger, *The Color of Credit: Mortgage Discrimination, Research Methodology and Fair Lending Enforcement*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003. \$39.95 hardcover.

This book blends policy analysis and complex technical recommendations relating to the mortgage lending industry. For one, the authors comprehensively examine what has been learned about mortgage-lending discrimination in recent years. They re-analyze existing loan-approval and loan-performance data and devise new tests for detecting discrimination in contemporary mortgage markets. They also review the 1996 Boston Federal Reserve study, examining new evidence that the minority-white loan-approval disparities found represented discrimination rather than variations in underwriting standards justified on

business grounds. Ross and Yinger also investigate how the current fair-lending enforcement system overlooks disparate impact discrimination and disparate treatment. Specifically, there are two primary forms of discrimination in mortgage lending: disparate treatment which is the obvious and unequal treatment of applicants; and disparate-impact policies that, while equally applied, systematically disadvantage minorities. Lenders desiring to practice disparate-treatment discrimination but who are prevented from doing so may achieve virtually identical results by using discrimination-based characteristics other than group membership. One example of the latter is credit scoring or other automated underwriting, which can be used to discriminate while appearing to treat all groups equally. Lastly, the authors develop innovative (but highly technical) procedures to rectify weaknesses in the mortgage loan system.

Ross and Yinger note that in 2000, the home ownership rate in the United States was 67.4 percent—an all-time high. However, home ownership were not evenly spread across ethnic groups. The home ownership rate was 73.8% for non-Hispanic whites, 47.2% for blacks, and 45.5% for Hispanics. The authors argue that while this gap may have many causes, one of the likeliest is discrimination in mortgage lending. The authors make a convincing case for discrimination in mortgage lending. Data collected under the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA), which records applicant ethnicity and the disposition of the mortgage application, shows that in 2000 black applicants were twice as likely as white applicants to be turned down for a loan, and Hispanic applicants were 41 percent more likely to be turned down. While these disparities in loan approvals do not conclusively prove that blacks and Hispanics face discrimination in mortgage lending (in that they do not take into account possible differences in borrower creditworthiness) the differences are so dramatic that they strongly imply the existence of discrimination.

Ross and Yinger observe that while no one explicitly argues for discrimination in mortgage lending, some maintain that discrimination is a historical relic and no lender could survive in today's competitive market while practicing it. The authors note three reasons why this assumption is naive: (1) the HMDA data shows that ethnically-based loan rejection ratios have remained

constant (at about 2.0) throughout the 1990s, (2) the results of the Boston Federal Reserve Bank study found extensive evidence of loan discrimination, and (3) strong evidence points to extensive disparate-impact discrimination.

Ross and Yinger argue that the current fair-lending enforcement system is seriously flawed since it misses cases of discrimination in loan approval that take the form of disparate treatment and is incapable of identifying loan-approval discrimination which takes the form of disparate-impact. They propose three steps for eliminating these flaws. First, fair-lending enforcement agencies should come up with the resources needed to ascertain that they are not missing existing disparate-treatment discrimination. Multivariate regressions should be employed by these agencies to make that determination. Second, these agencies should conduct loan-approval regressions based on applications submitted to a large sample of lenders. These regressions should recognize the complexity of underwriting standards and the possibility that these standards vary systematically across lenders based on their loan portfolios. Third, fair-lending enforcement agencies should implement a performance-based analysis of loan-approval decisions to supplement the multiple regression procedures.

All told, the authors provide an excellent summary of the available economic and statistical evidence for racial discrimination in the mortgage industry. While comprehensive, *The Color of Credit* is basically a specialized volume for a specialized audience. Although Ross and Yinger target their book at economists and the banking industry, many managers and policymakers most will find large sections of it difficult to read. While the policy sections are well-written and understandable, the full value of the critique and especially the technical recommendations and statistical research, requires a background in economics and knowledge of statistical procedures.

While Ross and Yinger take a technical, almost laborious approach to the subject matter, most social workers or advocates who work with the poor have acquired enough anecdotal evidence to say "So what, I already know that." Nevertheless, it is important for social workers and academics to understand how the process of discrimination is manifested since in contemporary

institutional discrimination, the devil is almost always in the details. In short, although the details may be tedious they are nevertheless important since that is the ground where many of the future battles will be fought.

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Tiziano Vecchiato, Anthony N. Malucchio and Cinzia Canali (Eds), *Evaluation in Child and Family Services: Comparative Client and Program Perspectives*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 2003. \$49.95 hardcover, \$24.95 papercover.

Evaluation of services and programs has become an increasingly important component of professional behavior in the social and behavioral sciences. The training and emphasis on evaluation is fueled, in part, by professional ethics requiring practitioners to determine that interventions they are using are effective. It is also supported by increased requirements of accountability by public and private funders of services. While increasing accountability has been a general trend, it is particularly important during a time of scarce resources for social services. Practitioners and programs must demonstrate that services are effective and, in a climate of increased competition for funds, that they are also efficient.

This edited book by Vecchiato, Mulucchio and Canali offers a unique examination of evaluation issues from a global perspective in the domain of child and family services. Chapter 1 describes permanency policies and research in the United Kingdom. Drawing comparisons to policies and research in Sweden, the United States and Australia, it concludes that no cross-national comparisons can be adequately made because of conceptual and research methodological differences across countries. Chapter 2 offers an approach to evaluating foster care outcomes with various data approaches, drawing from studies in the United States. Chapter 3 presents preliminary results of a participatory action research project with multi-problem children in Italy. Recognizing that assessment is a cornerstone of good practice, Chapter 4 introduces a model for assessment and a preliminary process evaluation of the model in England. Chapter 5, also based in England, is a descriptive study of short-term foster care from

the perspective of parents and social workers. Chapter 6 is an overview of program evaluation that links program objectives to evaluation, offering examples from family reunification programs in the United States. Chapter 7, drawing from the residential treatment experiences in the United States, summarizes the conceptual and empirical literature on group care and treatment in the U. S. Chapter 8 describes a participatory action project in England in the evaluation of parenting in family resource centers. Chapter 9, focusing on family support services in Australia, compares family and case worker data using qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Chapter 10 shifts the discussion back to frameworks used in evaluation, offering a model for thinking about outcome evaluation—one oriented towards children's rights. Chapter 11 provides practical step-by-step advice on working with agency staff in the planning and implementation of outcome evaluation, drawing from child welfare projects in the United States. Chapter 12 discusses the issues in Sweden around practice evaluation for practitioners while chapter 13 presents a project in Israel that was designed to teach workers to evaluate their practice.

The book offers an interesting amalgamation of approaches and ideas in evaluation. As a first attempt to begin a cross-national dialog, it succeeds in motivating the reader to think about the issues faced by the helping professions globally. The editors bring together many renowned scholars and distinguished practitioners from numerous countries with stimulating ideas. The writing is generally clear and unambiguous, which is itself quite remarkable given that authors are from several countries where English is not the first language. Even in English-speaking countries there are colloquial differences in writing and word meaning that could have been problematic in pulling together a book of this kind. The editors are commended on their accomplishment.

However, there are a few areas of concern about the book. First, and the most problematic, is that there are no commonalities across chapters. There are different programs using difference methodologies, different measures, and different conceptual frameworks. So much more could have been learned if there had been more uniformity. Instead, the reader is left with descriptions of various programs in various countries. This is helpful but so much more could have been done to globalize the issues in

evaluation. Second, the book is Eurocentric and offers insights only from the more developed countries. There is so much going on in Eastern and Central Europe, Asia and Africa that was completely lacking in this dialog. This was disappointing but it offers an opportunity to expand the discussion in future projects. Finally, the studies in the book suffer from the same sampling, methodology and measurement problems that plagued much of evaluation research to date. This includes small, convenience samples, no comparison groups, and lack of valid and reliable measures, to name just a few issues. The reader would have hoped that this discourse would have offered innovation in any of these issues since we have so much to learn. In summary, for anyone interested in evaluation research from a global perspective, this is a good start. Even keeping in mind the limitations, there are lessons to be learned here that is worthy-of-note.

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Amanda Goldrick Jones, *Men Who Believe in Feminism*. Westport, CT: Praegar, 2003. \$64.95 hardcover.

When I mentioned to several colleagues that I was reviewing a book on the profeminist men's movement, they made some interesting comments—"Well, that must be a thin book," "Do we really need to know how men learn to cry" and "You don't mean those guys that beat drums and hug trees, do you?" If nothing else, Amanda Goldrick-Jones deserves credit for undertaking a topic that is often met with a smirk, rolled-eyes or dismissive opinions. Fortunately, she accomplishes more than that in her clear, often engaging, account of the ignored and misrepresented effort of some men to support feminist ideals.

In *Men Who Believe in Feminism*, Goldrick-Jones traces the emergence, activities and challenges of the key branches and organizations of profeminist (also termed anti-sexist) men's movements in the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, and Australia. In each country, these collective action efforts had their roots in the new wave of feminist activism of the 1970s. Goldrick-Jones describes the ways in which male activists framed their causes, determined

"valid" issues, held themselves varyingly accountable to feminists, and addressed internecine conflicts. In the United States, these efforts reached their zenith in the 1980s; in the other countries, a bit later. Currently, there is relatively little profeminist men's mobilization.

What is apparent from this book, however, is that men do need to be involved in anti-sexist organizing and education. In her most compelling section of the book, Goldrick-Jones first outlines the extent of violence against women, what she terms "the female holocaust", and then conveys the work men did to both support the efforts of feminists (mostly through fundraising) and to confront the actions of other men. Indeed, this anti-violence wing was and is the strongest of the profeminist movement.

Much of the book focuses on intra-movement schisms. In essence, there were three streams that claimed to represent "the men's movement". One focused on how men were constrained by traditional sex roles. These activists often claimed that while some men held societal power, most were also oppressed by patriarchy. As such, they had a relatively loose connection to feminism. A splinter group of this wing coalesced and extended the notion of male oppression by claiming that women, specifically feminists, held power over men. This became the basis for the mythopoetic movement championed by Robert Bly, the founder of the fathers' rights actions in divorce and custody issues, and more traditional religious efforts such as Promise Keepers. Not surprisingly, these men are hostile to feminists (and vice versa). Finally, a comparably smaller cadre of men focused on challenging the gender power and privilege held by men. For the most part, these men focused on anti-violence, and while some of their efforts were viewed with skepticism, there was some sense of working in concert with feminists. This wing is the truest expression of profeminist men.

As with the feminist movement, the politics of race, class and sexuality undermined the profeminist movement. Regardless of which wing one focuses on, participants were overwhelmingly white and middle-class. From the conference proceedings, magazines and other literature reviewed for this book, there appears to be few attempts to engage men of color. Issues regarding sexuality, heterosexual and gay, proved even more complex. For example,

some men attempted to defend certain types of pornography as freedom of sexual expression, which met with considerable condemnation from many feminist activists. And while support for gay rights was often forthcoming, that was substantially undermined when a prominent pro-feminist leader in England confessed that when he was 17 he had a sexual relationship with a 12 year old boy. The subsequent firestorm effectively ended his activism, as well as his organization—the National Organization for Men Against Sexism.

Goldrick-Jones account of the profeminist male movement is primarily descriptive, which isn't a problem, per se. Yet had she contexted her account within an analytical framework, such as those provided by the extensive social movement literature, the reader would have a much more dynamic understanding of this movement's growth, development and decline. For example, sociological accounts of the feminist movement, with its competing ideologies, decentralized structure, and struggles with political purity and cooptation, provide ideal templates for a more rigorous examination of the profeminist movement.

The other main critique of this book has to do with the seemingly misleading focus conveyed in the title. It does provide evidence for the ways in which some of the profeminist campaigns and activists engaged in transgressive gender politics, but the reader is left to connect the dots. And, there is little information about the *men* who made up this movement. How, for example, were their lives altered? Were they able to challenge their own gender privilege, and if so, how? Did they create new forms of progressive masculinity? These questions are important not only in understanding the dynamics of the movement, but also in comprehending the social change efforts of anyone who is combating their own group's power such as white people engaged in antiracism work. Yet Goldrick-Jones leaves this important aspect of transformational politics unexamined. However, it is important to remember that the author has tackled a relatively unknown collective engagement to address sexism. She shows that there were men committed to ending gender injustice, and shows that many more are needed today.

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Elisabeth Reichert, *Social Work and Human Rights: A Foundation for Policy and Practice*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003. \$49.50 hardcover, \$24.50 papercover.

Reichert's thorough and informative book on human rights makes an important contribution to the literature on this topic. Beginning with an overview of the history and development of human rights in the opening chapter, in Chapter 2 Reichert goes on to examine the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which she analyses clause by clause, at the same time identifying their implications for social work. International aspects of human rights and their application to the social work profession are the focus of the last two chapters, 8 and 9 respectively. Chapters 3 and 4 are jointly authored chapters with Robert J. McCormick on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights respectively. The book thus provides a thorough knowledge of the three generations of human rights and the content of human rights declarations. Readers interested in direct guidance on applying human rights principles to practice will not be disappointed for social work's central role in working with disadvantaged groups is reinforced by Reichert's focus on 'vulnerable groups' including women (chapter 5), children, people with disabilities and or HIV / AIDS, gays and lesbians, older persons, and victims of racism (chapter 6).

However, Reichert writes about human rights as moral imperatives without any explicit discussion of their moral derivation or the fact that they only really make sense from a moral perspective. One would not expect people who did not hold a moral view of the person as deserving of respect, as having dignity and being able to choose freely for themselves to take rights seriously. At the same time, human rights are closely connected to notions of social justice. I do not agree with Reichert that no clear understanding of social justice exists in the international social work literature, although she might be a better judge than me on the North American literature, for clearly her book is about North America and aimed at North American readers. I would argue that it is precisely because social justice is central to social work's value system that we ought to take rights seriously

because justice concerns the way in which rights and resources are distributed in society. Here social work's principles of equality, equity or fairness, and the just distribution of resources come into play. Just as Wormer says in her introduction, 'social work, in the sense of the well-being of people, and human rights are inextricably linked' (p. ix), so too are the notions of social justice and human rights inextricably linked. While human rights might well encompass 'a more comprehensive set of guidelines for the social work profession' (p. 7) than social justice, and it is certainly in this vein that Reichert's book is written, these guidelines make no sense unless they are understood from a moral perspective and within a broader understanding of notions of social justice.

Readers looking for this broader philosophical perspective will be disappointed for Reichert makes no attempt to grapple with intractable problems in philosophy on the nature and grounds of rights. Reichert employs a foundational conception and a deductive approach to rights where one frames the laws or defines the conventions (for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), then derives what rights a person has from these and seeks to apply them without question. As in other areas of social work, this technical approach does not sit well with more flexible postmodern and social constructionist perspectives which favour more inductive, grounded approaches working from the bottom up and wariness of universalising forces which overlook local cultures and practices. Reichert cites Ignatieff's view of claims to the universality of rights as another 'cunning exercise in Western moral imperialism' (p. 5).

Because Reichert takes a derivative view of rights and overlooks their moral and political basis, she skirts this crucial issue in current social work theorising. From this perspective, Reichert's book works for the context it addresses, namely North America, and for social workers favouring a cookbook 'how to do it' approach to social work. Broader political ramifications of North America's stance on human rights and their effect on countries around the world are not within the purview of Reichert's analysis. Yet at one level, I agree with Reichert, one has to start somewhere. While we might debate the meaning and derivation of rights *ad infinitum*, social workers are still faced daily with people in need requiring assistance. No harm hopefully can be done at the

individual level by applying a human rights framework to social work practice. However, I am more sceptical about human rights in the hands of nations bent on war. But the political character of rights, that is, recognition of the relationship between individual actions and broader political decisions is ignored when it is this broader political understanding embodied in discourse on social justice which shows how rights are inextricably bound up with the way in which society is ordered and its goods distributed and how individuals are affected by these arrangements. The idea that political morality should be based wholly or partly on the notion of human rights is a familiar theme in liberal theories and Western politics as Ignatieff recognises and other writers on human rights have clearly acknowledged this link. By overlooking the moral and political nature of rights, Reichert fails to see the inextricable link between human rights and social justice.

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Jenny Hockey and Alison James, *Social Identities across the Life Course*. New York: Pgrave Macmillan, 2003. \$75 hardcover, \$24.95 papercover.

Social identification across the life course examines the concept of social identities by reframing our perceived notion of aging. The task is to explain life processes and their impact on peoples' everyday lives that consider age as integral to one's identity and note that surprisingly little is known about age based identification. They explore research within the social sciences from two separate areas, social identity and aging across the life cycle. They contend that one cannot develop a frame of reference as how we come to age unless these areas of social sciences are integrated.

Many disciplines, such as sociology, economics, psychology, and so forth have produced theorists who have provided an understanding of aging from rather traditional dichotomous perspectives. We now expect specific age related categories to delineate the processes of aging. For example, in every aging category there are very distinct behaviors which make up and accompany

each age category such as child, teen, young adult, senior citizen and so forth.

The major problem with age related categories is that they are not mutually exclusive, therefore people may take on behaviors generally thought to be in one age category while chronologically being in another age, or they may lack distinguishing characteristics in one category as their age increases. The issue becomes what benchmarks does one use to identify "their age". The authors note that the social sciences have generally not explained aging as both an experiential and situated process. Basically, while we know something about what it is like to be a child, to be maturely aged or elderly, the complex process and experiences involved in becoming a small child, in becoming older is relatively unchallenged.

In the first part of their book, the authors critically analyze classical theories of the life course and have pointed up their limitations and strengths. They then use a historical account of the citizen life course for discussing the range of theorists approaches to aging. They then move on to reframe the traditional approach to aging by incorporating the literature on aging and identity. In the latter part of their book, they illustrate their approach through three case studies of gender and sexuality, the family and work.

The opening question, how do we know we are aging, and how old one is, is interesting and thought provoking. On one hand we can age according to "societal" arrangements—retirement, senior citizens discounts, increasing health/medical problems, and other benchmarks, or we can "age" in comparison to others and how others see us. In other words, one can "defy" age categorization by doing things not usually expected nor identified with growing old—for example, playing basketball in one's 50's with young adults or continuing to work, travel, or educate oneself, volunteering, etc.—all are activities which are not consistent with society's view of an aged person.

The authors make their point in each chapter, so one gets reinforcement throughout. They illustrate that no matter one's perception, one's age is very much a function of social interaction. This is how one comes to understand much about him/her self. One point often overlooked but which must be reinforced is that the usual categories child, adult, or old person do not map easily

onto the experience. One cannot fulfill all the expectations or levels of accomplishments identified by theorists in each category.

The authors emphasize that one's identity is continually shaped by the interaction between an individual and society. For example, they note that a critical dimension of this interaction is "to explore the cumulative effect of earlier life events on later ones and to investigate how the timing of one event—child birth for example—might shape the subsequent life trajectory of any one individual" (pg. 91). Placing the catastrophic events of 9/11/01 in this context should make their point abundantly clear. It is not presumptuous to state that the course of human behavior has been significantly altered from that day forward.

The book requires a solid background in theories of human behavior and the usual description within each category from which to reflect, compare, and contrast how these differ between categories. There is much to be learned from their approach to the life cycle in the context of establishing one's identity. Indeed, no longer should we see or think of the course of human behavior in theoretical constructs and how close and individual fits the pattern, but rather to understand how social forces and events work in concert with an individual's makeup and societal expectations to help shape an individual's identity. As the authors note, in a casual manner, that an individual's development and growth is likely to be uneven and not fit easily into mutually exclusive theoretical categories.

This is a book that will encourage one to recast the framework for how one thinks about and understands aging itself, the process of aging, and the continuing unfolding of one's identity. It is thought provoking and readers should find it stimulating, as in a contrast to the usual and traditional thinking of the categorization of aging across the life cycle.

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Book Notes

Constance F. Citro, Daniel R. Iglén and Cora B. Marrett (Eds.), *Protecting Participants and Facilitating Social and Behavioral Sciences Research*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2003. \$39.00 papercover.

Protecting Participants represents the findings of the Panel on Institutional Review Boards, Surveys, and Social Science Research, which was established in 2001 by the National Academies' National Research Council. The Panel was charged with examining the structure, function, and performance of the Institutional Review Board system as it relates to social, behavioral, and economic sciences (SBES). Researchers have long complained about problems in obtaining "human subjects approval" for their projects in the SBES. This work highlights the inadequacies of the various systems and makes specific recommendations for improvement.

After reviewing the history and research literature of SBES-related human subjects protection, examining IRB guidelines of major research universities and federal agencies, and hearing from witnesses from various SBES professional organizations, the Panel produced fifteen recommendations. After an Executive Summary, an explanation of the context for the Panel, and a discussion of basic concepts in protecting human subjects, the book presents a history of regulatory activity spanning 1945 to the present. The Panel's recommendations are organized within four areas: (1) enhancing Informed Consent; (2) enhancing confidentiality protection; (3) enhancing the effectiveness of IRBs in handling "minimal risk" research; (4) and general system improvement issues. Helpful appendices include comparisons of changes in legislative language over the years, information about selected relevant organizations, a literature review of research related to IRB operations, and a commissioned chapter on data confidentiality issues.

Among the major points made by the Panel is that IRBs are not being as flexible as allowed by federal regulations in approving human subjects applications. The Panel found that IRBs, even

though overworked, spend too much time revising wording of Informed Consent forms without understanding the full context of Informed Consent processes for the types of populations typically studied by SBES research (e.g. ethnic and language minorities and vulnerable populations). The Panel also maintains that IRBs apply higher than necessary protection standards for research that poses little or no risks to participants.

The Panel recommends that the federal Office for Human Rights Protection (OHRP) develop procedures and guidelines for Informed Consent that are suitable for alternative populations (including ethnic and language minorities). OHRP should also provide more specific direction about the conditions under which Informed Consent can and should be waived. To better protect confidentiality, OHRP and IRBs should develop and implement "best practice" techniques to protect privacy and confidentiality. Flexibility should be allowed when researchers use microdata that already incorporate such techniques. Both OHRP and IRBs should better tailor waived and expedited reviews according to minimal risk involved with SBES research participants.

The book's strength is in its systematic and clear presentation of the findings and recommendations, and the comprehensiveness of scope. One issue that should concern social work researchers is the lack of social work involvement in any of the committees, hearings, and Panel membership. In order to represent the unique perspective of social work research, social work leadership and research organizations must find ways to become actively involved in future development of policies regarding the protection of research participants in SBES research.

Ed Cohen, University of California, Berkeley

Milton Schwebel, *Remaking America's School Systems: Now Separate and Unequal*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003. \$39.95 hardcover, \$29.95 papercover.

It is widely agreed upon that the public school system in the United States is not meeting the educational needs of its students. Urban schools in particular are known to have a hard time employing and retaining qualified teachers and often lack basic supplies and adequate facilities. Milton Schwebel agrees, but takes a different view than that of most proponents of educa-

tional reform. He denies the education system in the United States is has ever been in crisis or that it is currently in crisis. Instead, he describes the situation as an endemic, ongoing problem wherein a large portion of students receive an inferior education.

Schwebel claims that, contrary to popular belief, America's public schools are fulfilling their function. Impoverished schools are providing society with the workers it needs to fill the lowest paying jobs. Those in the upper class are content to let these students receive a below average education because it assures that they will not compete with their own children for high status, well paying positions. Those in power, those who create policy and those with money, have the educational system they want. Therefore, they are unwilling to pay for a decent and effective public educational system.

The author believes that until Americans feel a moral obligation to provide all students with an equal educational opportunities, nothing will change. Minor reforms will come and go, perhaps well-intentioned and strong in the beginning, but they will continue to become so watered down and poorly enforced by the time they are put into practice that no long lasting change will be perceptible. According to Schwebel, the United States has three school systems. The first is comprised of schools that everyone would want their children to attend. Supported by the community, filled with ample resources, and staffed by qualified, well-paid teachers, these are the schools that produce America's future leaders. The second gives its students basic skills and knowledge, and provides society with reliable workers. The third educational system serves the urban and rural poor. These are the schools with few resources, little parental involvement, permanent substitutes, low attendance and graduation rates, and students who oftentimes fail to learn even the most basic skills.

Schwebel's matter of fact tone and easy to understand writing style makes this book of interest to more than simply those in the field of education. He gives suggestions for improvements and solutions to the problems that plague our educational system. His measures aim to do away with the third school system and strengthen the second. Some are short-term, to be put in place by teachers and community members. However, most of his recommendations would take many years to accomplish and

require the collaboration of policy makers, community leaders, parents, voters, and school districts.

Schwebel recognizes the vastness of the problem when he recommends such things as guaranteed full-time employment, national health insurance, parent-as-teacher training classes, free public preschool, after school programs in all elementary and middle schools, and a higher value placed on teachers, with corresponding pay. He ends the book with the acknowledgement that support for his proposals need political and broad-based support and that all sections of society would have to be committed to change. Although the challenge is great, he points out that several organizations that have already initiated this type of work. Despite the book's pessimistic thesis, the author remains hopeful that the situation can be changed.

Andrea Anderson, University of California, Berkeley

Arlie Russel Hochschild, *The Commercialization of Intimate Life: Notes from Home and Work*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003. \$19.95 papercover.

Although most social policy writing has focused on the state and non-profit sectors in the provision of welfare, the importance of the family in meeting needs and managing social problems has now been recognized. This has come about largely through the efforts of feminist social policy scholars who have stressed the way most people's well-being is shaped by nurturing and caring behaviors within families. However, while much more attention is now being paid to the family in social policy scholarship, it has not changed the focus on state provision within the subject. Most of the literature continues to view the state as the primary institution for promoting people's welfare.

Arlie Hochschild's latest book is not written from a social policy perspective but it makes a major contribution to the field by showing that an understanding of the changing family and its interface with the market—that other neglected dimension of social policy analysis—is crucial for the analysis of social support, caring and social welfare today. Hochschild is a highly respected sociologist at the University of California, Berkeley whose previous books on family issues, feminism and social care have

attracted widespread attention. This book is a collection of essays, and although many were published previously, the author had added some new papers and organized the material in a readable yet challenging way.

The book is concerned with the way family relationship (and caring in particular) have changed as modern society has become more marketized. She argues that the family and its unique culture, relationships and supports have been profoundly affected by the market. The family cannot now be viewed as a separate domain from the market. Indeed, she argues that the market has today affected family life to a remarkable degree. The intimate and caring world of the family has been commercialized and families increasingly purchase care on the market. As adult family members are preoccupied with the world of work and material achievement, as family disintegration and divorce now characterized family life, families are compelled to purchase care to meet the needs of children, the elderly and even their working adult members. This involves a complex set of interaction with market based institutions such as day care centers, private schools, nursing homes and nannies who are imported from developing countries to provide the care and affection and even the love that middle class families find increasingly difficult to provide. The book's first page contains a brief reference to a conversation which Hochschild had with a Thai nanny in the San Francisco Bay Area who reported that she loved her employer's children more than her own who had remained in Thailand. Hochschild asks whether this is an example of a new form of global marketism that extracts love from poor countries to meet the deficit in our own.

Startling observations such as these pepper this highly original and important analysis of the way family care, intimacy, relationships, and love are being modified by market relations and consumer capitalism. The book is wide ranging and covers numerous topics that will stimulate much reflection and debate. These topics include the use of advice books in family affairs, relationships between children and parents, mothers and daughters and women and men and, of course, the marketization and commercialization of family life. The book is of great importance to social policy scholars who have not adequately grasped the

extent to which market capitalism is penetrating the domain of family life, and presenting new challenges for those who seek to formulate social policies that enhance social well-being.

James Midgley, University of California, Berkeley

Joseph Anderson and Robin Wiggins Carter (Ed.), *Diversity Perspectives for Social Work Practice*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2003. \$42.67 papercover.

Among the many skills that social workers need to possess, competence related to culture and diversity is of fundamental importance. There is a general acceptance that practitioners and researchers in the field must be cognizant of the ways in which the experiences of diverse populations need to guide their work. However, consensus is lacking on the content and means of conveying such a curriculum, while there is also a movement towards greater sophistication in the understanding of diversity. It has extended beyond ethnicity alone to encompass any number of differing life experiences. Moreover, practice skills have evolved from a dependence on knowing "cultural facts" to "learning how to learn."

This text situates itself in this trend as a presentation of the expanded applications of diversity. A commitment to the social work values of social justice and well-being are visibly at the core of each of its chapters. These values are promoted through the use of twelve conceptual frameworks that lie within three broader perspectives. Ethnocultural perspectives aim to sensitize social workers to the relationship between ethnicity and culture, while oppression perspectives examine the consequences of prejudice and power. The "vulnerable life situation" perspectives consider how practitioners can learn from clients about the impact of different vulnerabilities and strengths. At the heart of these diversity perspectives are the strengths and empowerment frameworks. Though familiar in any social work program, this text addresses their specific relevance to diversity issues. The other frameworks consist of ethnic-sensitivity, value orientation, ethnic minority, dual perspective, ethnic-centered/afrocentric, social justice, ethnography, communication, feminism and constructivism.

Each framework has a chapter devoted to expounding upon

its development, core principles, practice applications and case examples. This is helpful for in-depth comprehension. Of note is the inclusion of frameworks not typically recognized in this area—communication and constructivism. Respectively, they contribute an important understanding of the processes and dimensions of communicating, and of the different ways of knowing and interpreting reality. Both seek to reduce the misunderstanding that can occur between diverse peoples.

However, similar-sounding frameworks are not compared clearly and systematically, such that a student could turn to a summary chapter that readily identifies differences in principles and practices. Given the interesting mix of frameworks contained within the text, the inadequate use of disability and sexual orientation perspectives is perplexing. They are mentioned within social justice and feminism, but diversity nevertheless remains confined to ethnic-based world views. Yet, this shortcoming is mitigated by the “how to” approach of this book that enables a flexible use of the various practice guidelines. A vital theme ties together these guidelines; the multi-dimensionality of individuals requires a balance between assessing the diversity within and the diversity between people. This dynamic is recognized throughout the chapters, and informs the development of solid practice skills.

Rose Barreto, University of California, Berkeley

John P. Bartkowski and Helen Regis, *Charitable Choices: Religion, Race and Poverty in the Post-Welfare Era*. New York: New York University Press, 2003. \$69.00 hardcover, \$19.00 papercover.

Since coming to office in 2001, the Bush administration has moved decisively to implement its faith based approach to social welfare. Informed by evangelical Christian writers such as Marvin Olasky and political advocates on the religious right, Mr. Bush had previously declared his dislike for government social programs. During the 2000 presidential election campaign he indicated that, if elected, he would shift the responsibility to care for those in need from government agencies to religious organizations. He agreed with Christian conservatives that religious organizations, and the Christian churches in particular, were far better equipped than government to help needy people. Unlike

impersonal social service bureaucrats and detached social work professionals, the churches have a historic commitment to help those in need as well as an inherent compassion and empathy for their plight. By allocating a greater share of government resources to fund sectarian social agencies, government may eventually withdraw from the welfare services field.

It is in this context that this interesting book provides a detailed account of how faith based social welfare programs operate in three counties in Mississippi. Although the authors use the term 'charitable choice' rather than faith based social welfare, the connotation is the same. The term was popularized in the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act which permits the use of public funds by religious organizations providing services to clients in receipt of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (or TANF) services. Previously, sectarian agencies could contract with governments to provide services but they were required strictly to segregate their social service and religious programs. Under the 1996 legislation, these restrictions have been eased and despite claims that the new rules violate constitutional provisions concerning the separation of church and state, funding for sectarian welfare programs has increased.

The book provides a thorough historical overview of the events that led up to the Bush administration's decision to promote faith-based social welfare. The authors show that efforts to support faith based welfare are not new, and that religious advocates had long campaigned to divert government funds to support sectarian welfare programs. They also show that the churches and sectarian welfare organizations have long been involved in the provision of social services. This point is amply illustrated by their account of how local congregations in Mississippi have sought to assist needy people. They point out that under Governor Kirk Fordice's administration, Mississippi had been a pioneer of faith based provisions. The Faith and Families initiative was introduced in 1994 and it supported the efforts of local churches and sectarian welfare agencies. Although the program was abandoned by a subsequent Democratic administration, it boosted faith based programs. The book reports on a detailed empirical study of the congregations that were involved in the

program. The authors show that the provision of social services by faith based organizations is not a simple or non-controversial matter. They conclude that there is scope for enlarging the involvement of religious organizations in social welfare, but believe that issues of access to resources, the independence of religious bodies, differences in culture, realities of race and other issues need to be more thoroughly debated. This thoughtful book is a useful addition to the growing literature on the subject and should be widely consulted.

James Midgley, University of California, Berkeley

S. M. Amadae, *Rationalizing Capitalist Democracy: The Cold War Origins of Rational Choice Liberalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003. \$19.00 papercover.

Conventional social policy scholarship has been compelled to address the rapid expansion of market-based social welfare over the last two decades and a good deal has now been published on the subject. Generally, the social policy literature has been highly critical of the marketization of social provision, and the market is usually characterized as being inimical to human welfare. The concept of social justice has often been used in social welfare writing to support the critique of market based welfare. Reflecting the legacy of social democratic thinking in the field, many social policy scholars have argued that social justice is best served through statutory welfare provision. But, as the author of this extremely interesting book reveals, principles of freedom, fairness and equality of opportunity have also been woven into a neoliberal conception of justice that supports arguments for a market-based welfare system. Critics of welfare marketization have paid little if any attention to these arguments. This book provides an excellent summary of the views of neoliberal scholars who support a market-based welfare system and should be widely consulted by anyone working in the field of social policy today.

Although the term 'neoliberalism' is generally preferred in social policy circles, Amadae uses the term 'rational choice liberalism', and relates this school of thought not only to the promotion of market capitalism but to the advocacy of liberal democracy and wider individualist values. He pays particular attention to the

geopolitical context in which rational choice liberalism emerged in the middle decades of the 20th century. Although rational choice liberalism is firmly rooted in the classical theories of Adam Smith, the 19th-century marginalists and proponents of *laissez-faire*, it was in the immediate post-Second World War decades that rational choice theory was shaped by scholars such as Arrow, Buchanan, Tullock and Riker. They drew inspiration from the classical theorists as well as the contemporary writings of Shumpeter, Hayek and Popper among others. Many of the formative proponents of rational choice articulated their ideas at the height of the Cold War in the 1950s and 1960s, and several were closely associated with the Rand Corporation.

Amadae's account begins with the Rand Corporation and its contribution to public policy formulation through the development of sophisticated decision-making technologies. Several leading rational choice thinkers drew on the resources of the Corporation, and formulated mathematically based model of decision making which, they claimed, were devoid of ideology and based entirely on scientific principles. It is in this context that rational choice theory formulated a set of principles which directly addressed questions of equity and distributive fairness. Arrow's impossibility theorem, Buchanan's work on public choice and even Sen's later writings on development and freedom are rooted in a conception of social justice based on carefully argued principles and articulated in mathematical terminology.

This is an engaging and important book that should be widely read. It draws on an extraordinary knowledge of the literature and brings to prominence important social theorists whose work is seldom cited by mainstream social policy writers. Although not written specifically for a social policy audience, it has direct relevance to the field and will be an important resource for those seeking to understand contemporary rational choice liberalism. It is a work of thorough scholarship that will challenge social policy critics of market-based welfare to more rigorously address the arguments of rational choice theorists and come to grips with the very complex issues they raise.

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Books for review should be sent to James Midgley, School of Social Welfare University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

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